

Hafa Adai!

April is Autism Awareness Month. **PAGE 2**

NTIA approves BPD Office initial BEAD proposal. **PAGE 3**

Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 66

TUESDAY APRIL 2, 2024

www.saipantribune.com

www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

\$1



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, along with Federal Aviation Administration representatives and CNMI dignitaries, break ground on the over \$1-million project to pave the access road leading to the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport commuter terminal.

CPA breaks ground on commuter access road paving project

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority officially broke ground on the over

\$1-million project to pave the access road leading to the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport's commuter terminal.

See CPA on Page 4

IPI: Relief not necessary today

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Despite previously asking U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David O. Carter to rule on its emergency request for a temporary restraining order by today, April 2,

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC informed the court that relief is not necessary today as the Commonwealth Casino

Commission has rescheduled its deliberation on the revocation of IPI's exclusive license to April 9.

See IPI on Page 4

CNMI mourns loss of former speaker Deleon Guerrero

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Palacios-Apatang administration and the people of the CNMI are mourning the passing yesterday on Saipan of former House of Representatives speaker Pedro "Paduna" R. Deleon Guerrero. He was 80 years old.

The cause of Deleon Guerrero's passing was not



Deleon Guerrero

immediately disclosed, but according to Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) he believes it's colon cancer.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang said in a joint statement that it is with heavy hearts that they share the news about the passing of Deleon Guerrero, "a beloved member of our community whose

See MOURNS on Page 4



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Commonwealth Casino Commission board chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero talks about, among other issues, the expiration of the terms of commissioners Ramon M. Dela Cruz of Tinian and Martin Mendiola of Rota during the board's monthly meeting in the CCC conference room at Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai last Thursday. Also in the photo is assistant attorney general Lucy Blanco-Maratita, who is the new counsel for CCC.

Terms of 2 CCC commissioners expiring April 30

» **Appointing new commissioners challenging as it would be pro bono due to IPI's non-payment of \$3.1M in annual regulatory fee**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Four members of the Commonwealth Casino Commission board are serving as judges in a pending case whether to revoke or not the

exclusive license of the Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, but the terms of two commissioners are expiring this April 30.

When the terms of commissioners Ramon M. Dela Cruz of Tinian

See TERMS on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

The taste of nostalgia is now closer to residents of central and northern Saipan with the opening of Galaxy II Snack Bar in Garapan last March 4.

PAGE 9



WORLD

Tens of thousands of Israelis thronged central Jerusalem on Sunday in the largest anti-government protest since the country went to war in October.

PAGE 10



LIFE & STYLE

The Godzilla-King Kong combo stomped on expectations as "Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire" roared to an \$80 million opening on 3,861 North American screens.

PAGE 11



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Dozens gathered as Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt Gov. David M. Apatang signed a proclamation yesterday recognizing the month of April as Autism Awareness Month at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

CHICKEN & BEER

"CRISPY, CRUNCHY PERFECTION IN EVERY BITE."

01. Soy Sauce Chicken
Sweet, sticky, soy garlic glaze paired with the double-crunch fried chicken.

02. Regular Chicken
Crispy on the outside, with a flavorful crust that contrasts and compliments the tender chicken inside.

03. Sweet & Sour Chicken
The chicken is incredibly juicy and glazed in an iconic sweet and sour sauce.

OUR BEST SELLER MENU

ONLY \$18.95 FLAVORED CHICKEN

ONLY \$13.95 ORIGINAL CHICKEN

Call Us (670) 234-3330 / 234-3331

DELIVERY TIME: 5:30 PM - 11:00 PM

OPERATION HOURS: 5:30 PM - 12:00 MN

LOCATED AT CHALAN KANOA, ADJACENT TO CK SMOKEHOUSE

April is Autism Awareness Month

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Endeavoring to bring further awareness and support to children on the spectrum and their families, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt Gov. David M. Apatang signed a proclamation recognizing the month of April as Autism Awareness Month yesterday at the Pe-

dro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Along with Autism Society of the CNMI, Disability Network Partners, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, and the Unique Pieces in Different Colors CNMI '23, several dignitaries joined the proclamation signing including Saipan Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho and several members of the 23rd CNMI Legislature led by Senate President Edith Deleon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) to show their support and love. The venue was crowded with families and community members as they showed their support in the campaign to not only raise more awareness about autism, but create a better and more inclusive environment for our brothers and sisters on the spectrum.

One of the highlights of the event was the showcase of talent on the spectrum, as three individuals and their family members got on stage and spoke on the amazing abilities of their loved ones who have autism, gifted, whether in music, book knowledge, and even extensive knowledge of dinosaurs and birds.

In a conversation with Clarice Arriola, president of the Autism Society of the CNMI, she shared that just seeing the amount of support in the room made her feel grateful.

"It's always an incredible experience seeing or being in the room filled with all our community members from different agencies, aspects, but more importantly our families that come out. It means so much to us parents and caregivers. We want

to just continue to promote autism awareness and we realize that our community is doing so much more in being more accepting and inclusive. However, we still feel that there are needs that we need to strive for, especially considering that we have very limited resources and professionals on island So as long as we communicate and kind of help lift each other up through their challenges, and more importantly, through their milestones, it really fills the gap for us parents."

As a parent of a child on the spectrum herself, Arriola isn't a stranger to the challenges many parents like her face. When speaking on what she hopes to see in the future in regards to bettering services for those with autism she shared, "Due to the limited professional fields we have on island, I want to say we need more therapists. I know we do have the Public School System that has very prominent and strong-willed employees. However, the student-to-therapist ratio is very, very high, and so a lot of times we have to seek online services. PSS uses, if I'm not mistaken, TinyEye, and so students have to engage virtually to get some of their therapy sessions in. It would be really great if we can kind of recruit more therapists on island, whether it be occupational and speech therapy just to kind of give our students the hand-on, one-on-one experience because I'm sure it will be more meaningful than a virtual session," said Arriola.

She shared that the Autism Society of the CNMI will be having several events upcoming and invites community members to join.

GRAPHIC DESIGN SERVICES

GET THE DESIGNS YOU NEED

- ✓ Brochure Design
- ✓ Advertisement Design
- ✓ Banner Design
- ✓ Logo Design
- ✓ Designing Business Cards
- ✓ Poster Design

(670) 235-2440

sales@saipantribune.com

www.saipantribune.com

Hafa Adair
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

NTIA approves BPD Office initial BEAD proposal

The CNMI Broadband Policy & Development Office, established under the CNMI Office of the Governor, has announced a landmark achievement in its quest for digital equity and broadband expansion.

The CNMI's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Initial Proposal Volume 1 has received official approval from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. This approval, officially granted by the assistant secretary for the NTIA on March 21, 2024, after the proposal's submission on Dec. 6, 2023, aligns the CNMI with 28 states and Puerto Rico in a united effort to enhance broadband infrastructure across the United States.

The approved BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 1 focuses on utilizing existing broadband funding to address service gaps in unserved and underserved locations, identifying community anchor institutions, and detailing the BEAD Challenge Process tailored to the CNMI's needs. This comprehensive document underwent rigorous pre-submission revisions, a public comment period, and several rounds of feedback with the NTIA. Al-

though the process was timely, the extensive oversight ensures a thorough and effective plan for successful broadband deployment in the CNMI.

With the approval of Initial Proposal Volume 1, the CNMI BPD Office is now set to initiate the BEAD Challenge Process, which will be open to eligible entities such as local government units, non-profit organizations, and broadband service providers. This step is critical in fostering an inclusive approach to broadband development, ensuring all unserved and underserved locations are properly identified and assessed.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios expressed gratitude to the CNMI community and federal partners who contributed this significant step in the plan. "The approval by the NTIA is yet another crucial milestone in our focused plan to develop a robust broadband infrastructure necessary for a thriving, digital economy," he said.

In line with this announcement, the CNMI BPD Office's Digital Equity Five-Year Plan remains open for public review and comment until April 6, 2024, at 4:30pm ChSt. The CNMI BPD Office highly encourages the public to provide

comments and feedback, emphasizing that all submissions undergo thorough review and may contribute to enhancing the Digital Equity Five-Year Plan to better align with the needs of CNMI residents.

For more information on the approved BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 1, to review the Digital Equity Five-Year Plan, or to participate in the bi-weekly virtual meetings, visit their website at bpd.cnmi.gov or email them directly at cnmi.bpd@gmail.com. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI Broadband Policy & Development Office staff, led by special assistant Glenn Hunter, left, poses with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, center, with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's letter approving the CNMI's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Initial Proposal Volume 1.

USDA, CNMI cooperative agreement worth \$2M for local agriculture

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service announced Tuesday a cooperative agreement with the CNMI worth \$2 million under the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) said in his *e-kilili* newsletter over the weekend that the funds will be subgranted on a competitive basis for projects designed to build resilience across the middle of the supply chain.

Sablan said the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program aims to support and strengthen the islands' food supply chain, while targeting underserved food producers and processors by providing availability of more value-added products, improving processing capacity, enhancing infrastructure, and increasing access to locally produced

food products.

He said the U.S. Congress included funding for the RFSI program in the American Rescue Plan Act.

Sablan said the CNMI's Division of Agriculture Office is now accepting applications for the grants until April 29, 2024.

The delegate urges anyone interested to get more information to visit <https://dlnr.cnmi.gov/rfsi-program.html>.

The Agricultural Marketing Service encourages applications that serve smaller farms and ranches, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, underserved producers, veteran producers, and underserved communities.

In May 2023, USDA announced the availability of up to \$420 million through RFSI to strengthen local and regional food systems.

Jenny Lester Moffitt, who is the undersecretary for the USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs, said this partnership between USDA and

the CNMI is allowing critical funding to reach areas of the supply chain that need it most.

Moffitt said the projects funded through this program will create new opportunities for the region's small and midsize producers to thrive, expand access to nutritious food options, and increase supply chain resiliency.

CNMI Division of Agriculture director Jack Ogunoro said the CNMI has always been dependent on imports, and the

RFSI funding could provide a better opportunity for the islands to minimize the influx of imports and a better chance to improve locally processed food that can be substitutes of some imported food products.

Priorities of the RFSI funding focus on projects that benefit the islands' food supply chain and create new revenue streams and job opportunities for the islands and contribute to the economy as well.

Agile Reaper military exercise starts April 3



U.S. AIR FORCE

An F-22 Raptor assigned to the 525th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, lands during Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 at Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, March 1, 2023.

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Starting April 3, members of the U.S. Air Force will be setting up camp for its annual Agile Reaper exercise on Saipan and Tinian, according to a notice from the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CPA wants to give the Saipan and Tinian communities a heads up that about 150 U.S. Air Force personnel will be putting up tents and setting up camp at the Saipan airport field this Wednesday, and will be occupying half of the area north of the American Red Cross building for over a week as they conduct their Agile Reaper 2024 military exercise.

According to CPA assistant operations supervisor Zachary Reyes, the community should not be alarmed as the exercises are expected to occur on Saipan, Tinian, and Guam from April 3 to 15.

For the most part, Reyes

said, Saipan will serve as the main headquarters of this exercise so about half of the massive Saipan airport field will be closed off to the community to serve as the military's camp grounds.

In addition, the Saipan community can expect an increase in military operations flights from April 6 to 15.

The aircraft that will be seen on Saipan are two C-17 cargo aircraft.

Tinian will see the most air action, Reyes said, as most of the main aircraft operations will be done there.

Reyes said the U.S. military is planning on hosting another "Pet-a-Jet" event while they conduct their exercise on Saipan. That's when the military puts an aircraft on display for the public to see and inspect. In this case, the aircraft that may be open to the public are the military's two C-17 cargo planes.

"We will keep the community posted," said Reyes.

Building Maintenance & Repairer (Saipan, MP)

Monitor, repair, install, and perform routine maintenance of building and building equipment. Perform maintenance of electrical systems such as replace light bulbs and sockets, clean and repair circuit breaker panels etc. Assist in the setup of ventilation, refrigeration and generators, water heater, and conduct repairs when necessary. Do preventative maintenance programs and procedures. Maintain heating and plumbing systems to ensure functionality. Install, monitor, and inspect alarm systems (fire, protection) and schedule repairs when needed. Perform manual repairs when necessary such as fix locks, replace windows or doors, etc. Conduct general upkeep procedures and other tasks as assigned such as painting, carpentry, and plumbing. Install and monitor CCTV functionality, fire exit lights, fire alarms, fire extinguishers and do repair or replacement if needed. Respond to emergencies, including but not limited to: structural problems, equipment failures, plumbing and electrical issues, fire alarms, and power failures at all hours. Develop, implement, and maintain both routine and specialized maintenance schedules. Prepare repair cost documentation including material lists, labor estimates, and repair schedules. Monitor building safety and ensure compliance with CNMI & Federal codes and regulations. Prepare and maintain records of repairs and maintenance. Perform related tasks as required.

Minimum Requirements: High School graduate with 2-year experience in the position.

Send updated Resume & supporting credentials to
P&A CORPORATION ATTN: DOYI KIM, P.O. Box 506003, Saipan MP96950
saipanwinners5@gmail.com

Butcher & Meat Cutter (Saipan, MP)

Receive, inspect, and store meat upon delivery to ensure meat quality. Adhere to State & USDA-FSIS law, regulations, standards and all food safety regulations. Cut, trim, bone, tie, and grind meats, such as beef, pork, poultry, and fish, to prepare meat in cooking form. Cut, trim, or prepare consumer-sized portions of meat for use or sale in retail establishments. Wrap, weigh, label, and price processed meat. Prepare and place meat cuts and products in display counter, so they will appear attractive and catch the shopper's eye. Prepare special cuts of meat ordered by customers. Shape, lace, and tie roasts, using boning knife, skewer, and twine. Record quantity of meat received and/or issued to restaurants and customers. Keep and maintain records of meat delivered and sold. Cure, smoke, tenderize and preserve meat. Negotiate with companies or clients to determine order details. Do other related duties as assigned from time to time.

Minimum Requirements: High School graduate with 1-year experience in the position.

Send updated Resume & supporting credentials to Marianas Meat Harvesting Corporation ATTN: DOYI KIM, P.O. Box 506003, Saipan MP96950
marianasmeatharvesting@gmail.com or saipanwinners5@gmail.com

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES • CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB24-BPD-42400077

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 18, 2024 TIME: 9:00 A.M.

"LEASE OF ONE (1) CLASS 'E' VEHICLE FOR THE BROADBAND POLICY & DEVELOPMENT, SAIPAN"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF-SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE BROADBAND POLICY & DEVELOPMENT BY APRIL 11, 2024, TO MRS. MELIA JOHNSON VIA EMAIL AT mejohnson@dof.gov.mp OR MRS. DARLENE DU BRALL VIA EMAIL AT d.dubralld@dof.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ GLEN HUNTER
SA, BPD

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: DPW24-ITB No.: 42400068

SUBMISSION DATE: April 19, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Procurement of Services for Removal, Packaging, Containment, and Shipping of E-Waste Materials Collected at the Lower Base Transfer Station."

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **March 19, 2024** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on **April 04, 2024, 9:00 a.m.** local time at the Solid Waste Management Division Conference Room, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 p.m. local time on April 12, 2024** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
Secretary, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

TERMS

From page 1

and Martin Mendiola of Rota expire by the end of the month, this will leave vice chair Rafael S. Demapan of Saipan and commissioner Mariano Taitano of Saipan as the remaining

judges in the revocation case against IPI. Chairman Edward C. Deleon Guerrero of Saipan recused from the case.

The commissioners' deliberation whether to revoke or not IPI's casino license was supposed to be held today, Tuesday, but Demapan reset it to April 9, 2024 at 10am in

the CCC conference room, after IPI filed another request for temporary restraining order to stop the deliberation.

It means that the commissioners, sitting as judges in the revocation matter, should come up with a decision before their terms end by April 30.

Deleon Guerrero disclosed

during the board's monthly meeting last Thursday that with the expiring terms of Dela Cruz and Mendiola, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios needs to make an appointment so that the new two commissioners would serve beginning May 1, 2024.

Deleon Guerrero said the new commissioners may get a heads up that they will be serving pro bono because there's no money to pay them.

"But this is critical because if this thing is not resolved, it will require a minimum of two members to make a revocation occurs. So, this is an active issue that needed to be resolved," the chairman pointed out.

Deleon Guerrero disclosed that he advised Palacios that the appointment will be necessary as the law has changed from Public Law 18-56 to Public Law 21-38.

He said under Public Law 21-38, the governor makes the appointment of the commissioners and it needs the advice and consent of the Senate.

The chair noted that, in the prior Public Law 18-56, it was

every senatorial district that does the appointment and confirmation, and the governor did only for Saipan.

He said the new commissioner's term would begin May 1, 2024 and ends April 30, 2030.

Dela Cruz said in an interview that he already served six years and that Public Law 18-56 specifically mentioned that the casino commissioner can only serve one term.

Dela Cruz said it's been a learning experience and sad to say that since he got on board, all they did was try to get IPI into compliance.

"It's been a very difficult six years and we haven't

resolved the noncompliant violations that we have stipulated," he said.

Dela Cruz said since last year, the CCC has not been paid by IPI with the annual regulatory fee and that as a result, the commission went payless for one whole year.

"And that's why we only have three staff with us," said the commissioner, adding that the salary for the three staff came from the American Rescue Plan Act that the governor helped them for one month.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com



CHCC DONATION

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A father-and-son duo gives back to the community for children with underlying health conditions by making an Easter donation of 10 Easter basket with plastic eggs and candies last March 28 to the Pediatric Ward of the Commonwealth Health Center as a show of gratitude for their daughter/granddaughter, Azaleah "Lily" Lizama, who was confined at the hospital's Pediatric Ward last year.

CPA

From page 1

Last week, CPA was joined by representatives from the Federal Aviation Administration, CNMI dignitaries, and members of the community to officially break ground on the long-overdue project to pave the access road to the Saipan airport's commuter terminal.

The \$1.7-million project, funded by the FAA's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the Airport Terminals Program,

involves paving the access road starting from the intersection of Tun Herman Pan Road to the commuter terminal.

The contractors hired to complete the project by July are Hawaiian Rock Products and Hofschneider Engineering Corp.

Present during the groundbreaking ceremony were FAA Western-Pacific Region Director Mark McClardy, Airport District Office assistant manager Carlos Salas, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, Saipan

Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho, Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, and members of the CNMI Legislature.

CPA chair Jose "Joe" Ayuyu, during his speech, said this is only the beginning in terms of future renovations to the Saipan International Airport.

"Please bear with us. We are moving forward. There's so much that we can accomplish," Ayuyu said.

Palacios also took to the podium last Thursday to thank CPA for its efforts to improve the Saipan International Air-

port terminal.

Apatang echoed Palacios' sentiment adding that with the upcoming improvements, everyone, including visitors, will remember the great experience of arriving and departing Saipan.

In an interview with McClardy, he said he looks forward to being back in the CNMI soon to witness more ceremonies as major and minor improvements are underway for all CNMI airports including the Tinian and Rota International Airport.

IPI

From page 1

Last week, IPI filed its second motion for a temporary restraining order to stay CCC's revocation proceedings which was supposed to enter the deliberation phase today.

However, CCC filed a notice with the court yesterday stating that commission has voted to schedule the deliberation for April 9 instead.

"On March 28, the commission held its regular monthly meeting. In the meeting, the commission members voted to schedule April 9, as the date to deliberate and make a decision on the revocation hearing involving the exclusive gaming license held by IPI. The agenda for the March 28 meeting indicated an April 2 date for deliberation and decision on the casino license revocation hearing. The April date was on the agenda as a proposed date for the deliberation and decision. The commission did not notify IPI that April 2 was

the date for the deliberation because it was an agenda item to be voted upon. Notably, when the issue was voted upon during the March 28 meeting, the commission decided to schedule the deliberation for April 9, instead of the proposed April 2, date in view of the uncertainty related to IPI's second motion for a temporary restraining order pending before the court," said CCC.

IPI, for its part, filed its own notice stating that if CCC confirms that deliberation will be held on April 9, then there is no need for the court to issue a decision today, April 2.

"Should the commissioners confirm with the court that the deliberation and decision will be continued to April 9, it is not necessary for the court to provide the requested relief by April 2. Should the commissioners or an authorized representative of CCC not confirm with the court that deliberation and decision on the license revocation hearing is continued to April 9, IPI would have to

assume that the deliberation and decision may still move forward as scheduled since the only written notice about the deliberation and decision date from CCC indicates that the revocation and decision will take place on April 2. As such, IPI would think it is still necessary for the court to grant the requested relief before 9am on April 2," said IPI's notice.

Last Wednesday, IPI filed another request for a temporary restraining order to stay the CCC's revocation proceedings, this time claiming its due process rights will be violated if not granted one.

It was only last Feb. 27 when U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David Carter denied IPI's motion for a TRO against CCC, essentially allowing the commission to move forward with proceedings to revoke IPI's casino gaming license.

According to a 28-page memorandum in support of the TRO, IPI argues that its due process rights were violated because four of the five

CCC commissioners served as the hearing officers in the revocation proceedings (despite oral motions made by IPI that they be disqualified).

In addition, IPI argues that having these hearing officers violates IPI's due process rights because these commissioners have significant personal interests in the outcome of the proceedings.

IPI also argues that the CCC, with the five commissioners as the voting members for the revocation hearing, is ill-fitted to adjudicate the complex legal issues for two reasons: potential conflict of interests and institutional incompetency and lack of resources.

Because of this, IPI argues that the decision whether to revoke IPI's casino gaming license should be made by a court.

In addition, IPI claims that if the deliberation proceedings move forward, with all five commissioners as decisionmakers, the revocation of IPI's license would be a virtual certainty.

MOURNS

From page 1

legacy of public service and dedication will forever be remembered."

Palacios and Apatang said Deleon Guerrero was not only a devoted public servant, but also a compassionate leader who worked tirelessly to improve the lives of the people.

They said as a legislator, Deleon Guerrero introduced numerous bills aimed at addressing crucial issues facing the community, from education governance to environmental protection.

"His legacy of compassion and unwavering dedication to the CNMI will continue to inspire us all. Let us honor his memory by reflecting on his contributions and by striving to carry forward his vision of a better, brighter future for our islands," Palacios and Apatang said.

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) said she is deeply saddened of Uncle Pete's passing as she has so much deep respect for him.

The Senate president said she will forever cherish her private meetings with her uncle where he always provided his heartfelt guidance and views on issues of great importance to the CNMI.

She said while Deleon Guerrero was in Hawaii, she would send him links of sessions in the Legislature and he would always chat and give her his views.

"He would also send pictures of his medical progress. May Uncle Pete (Paduna) rest in peace with our Heavenly Father," the Senate president said.

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) extended his prayers and condolences to the family of Deleon Guerrero.

Villagomez said he has had the opportunity to work with Deleon Guerrero when he (Villagomez) was working for the late House vice speaker Felicidad T. Ogumoro.

He said Deleon Guerrero was also like a mentor to him

when he was running for his first term in office.

"I try my best to follow the pointers he has shared to this day. He will be greatly missed," the speaker said.

Manglona said Deleon Guerrero played numerous roles in shaping what the Commonwealth is today.

Manglona said from being a police officer, to a district senator, Commonwealth congressman, and Marianas Public Land trustee, Deleon Guerrero was at the forefront of it all.

The senator said one of Deleon Guerrero's contributions in his lifetime was his dedication to public service and his goal of making government work for its people.

Manglona said like politicians in his generation, Deleon Guerrero never evaded controversial and difficult decisions.

"He understood that as a public servant, he had to make those tough decisions and unpopular legislative votes as they were part of the privilege of public service," Manglona said.

Atty. Robert T. Torres said Deleon Guerrero was one of the leading Carolinian sons of the Marianas.

Torres said Deleon Guerrero was a lifelong Democrat, passionate about his politics and more so for his people and community.

The lawyer said while Deleon Guerrero was with the Marianas Public Land Trust, he shared his life's work for the airlines, shipping, with Guerrero Brothers Construction with his brother HR, and of his time in the Legislature as speaker.

"Life was not without its challenges for Paduna, but I found his passion to be an equal part of his compassion, and the range of it all," Torres said.

He said Deleon Guerrero was strong-willed but with a stronger capacity to care and give, to his family, friends, and especially his Carolinian community.

"I will miss his presence and my condolences go out to his wife Rowena and his children and family," Torres said.

New citizens will be able to seamlessly request Social Security updates

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on Friday announced that, starting April 1, applicants filing Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, will have the option to request an original or replacement Social Security number or card and update their immigration status with the Social Security

Administration without having to visit an SSA office.

Noncitizens applying for naturalization using the new edition of Form N-400 (edition date 04/01/24) will be able to request an SSN or replacement card when submitting Form N-400. New citizens may no longer need to

visit an SSA field office to apply for an SSN or replacement card or to provide documentation as evidence of their new U.S. citizenship status. Note that SSA may request additional information, if needed.

Applicants who use the 09/17/19 edition of Form N-400 will not have this option

as the SSA questions are only included in the 04/01/24 edition. The 04/01/24 edition of the Form N-400 will be available for online filing on April 1. To file Form N-400 online, applicants must first create a USCIS online account, which provides a convenient and secure method to submit forms,

pay fees, and track the status of any pending USCIS immigration request throughout the adjudication process. There is no cost to set up a USCIS online account, which offers a variety of features, including the ability to communicate with USCIS through a secure inbox and respond to Requests

for Evidence online.

USCIS previously announced its intention to expand the Enumeration beyond Entry program to include applicants who apply for U.S. citizenship in the Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization: First Anniversary Accomplishment Highlights. (USCIS)

US officials say pact with strategically key Pacific island nations highlights American commitment

BANGKOK (AP)—U.S. officials stressed recently that newly-approved legislation providing billions of dollars in funding for three strategically important Pacific island nations is an important sign of American commitment, which comes amid warnings China is actively trying to pry them away from Washington's sphere of influence.

The renewal of funds for the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau—known collectively as the Freely Associated States—had been held up for months by broader infighting in Congress over budgetary issues, even though they enjoyed widespread bipartisan support.

Leaders in the islands had warned that delays could have forced their governments to cut services, and swayed public opinion toward offers of investment from China.

Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr., who faces an election later this year, cautioned in a February letter that was made public that the Chinese Communist Party was seeking to take advantage of the American delay.

"Every day it is not approved plays into the hands of the CCP and the leaders here ... who want to accept its seemingly attractive economic offers at the cost of shifting alliances, beginning with sacrificing Taiwan," he wrote.

"The PRC has already offered to 'fill every hotel room' in our tourism-based private sector—and more if more are built—and \$20 million a year for two acres for a call center," he wrote, using the abbreviation for the People's Republic of China.

While the \$7.1 billion in aid, approved March 9 and to be spread over 20 years, is not a lot compared to other aid being considered by Congress—like \$95 billion for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan—it makes up a significant portion of the small island nations' budgets and is critical for health services, infrastructure projects, and education.

"We understand the past several months have been



Secretary of State Antony Blinken, at center right, meets with, from left, Marshall Islands Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Jack Ading, Palau's President Surangel Whipps, Jr., Blinken, and Micronesia's President Wesley Simina, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023, at the State Department in Washington.

frustrating for, and uncertain for our friends in the Pacific," said Taylor Ruggles, the State Department's senior advisor for the implementation of the pact through which funds are allocated, known as the Compact of Free Association.

"We've heard their concerns about getting it done, and frankly we shared those frustrations."

The new pact comes amid an American diplomatic push in the region, which gained new impetus when the Solomon Islands signed a security pact with China in 2022, a wake-up call that raised the prospect of Beijing establishing a naval foothold in the South Pacific.

"It was a top priority for this administration," Ruggles said.

He said it was a sign of the COFA agreement's importance that it was passed while other national security priorities are still stalled in Congress.

"This relationship really supports the security, stability, freedom and prosperity throughout the Indo-Pacific," Ruggles said.

Under the COFA agreement, citizens of the three nations have the right to live and work in the U.S. among other benefits, while the U.S. provides for their postal service, national defense and uses their territory—a maritime area larger than the continental United States—for military installations and exercises.

The first COFA agreement was signed with the U.S. in the 1980s, and it has already been renewed once.

"Strong ties between the United States and the Pacific islands form the foundation of our engagement and presence in the Pacific," said Interior Department official Keone Nakoa in a call from Washington with reporters.

"The provision of 20 years of new economic assistance sends a clear signal of the United States' commitment to the long, historic relationships we have held with the associated states."

The Freely Associated States have a combined population of less than 200,000 spread across more than 1,000 islands and atolls, about 4,000

kilometers (2,500 miles) southwest of Hawaii.

In addition to Guam, the states give the U.S. military a forward presence in the Pa-

cific, including a missile test facility in the Marshall Islands and a high-frequency radar system being built in Palau.

The countries have had

strong ties to the U.S. since American forces liberated them from Imperial Japan in World War II, but China has been working hard to try and win influence, and also convince Palau and the Marshall Islands, which still recognize Taiwan, to change loyalties.

In February, the presidents of the three countries warned American congressional leaders that the delays in the COFA renewal had "generated uncertainty among our peoples" and created "undesirable opportunities for economic exploitation by competitive political actors active in the Pacific."

The ties between the Freely Associated States and the U.S., however, are much deeper than strictly financial, Ruggles said.

"We have a really unique and special relationship with the Freely Associated States, arguably one of the closest relationships possible between sovereign nations," he said.

"Their citizens serve in the U.S. military, they can travel and work freely in the United States, our military provides for the national defense—we're as close as countries can be and this has been a long-standing relationship."

Zoe Stephanson inducted into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

BATON ROUGE, LA—Zoe Stephanson of Saipan was recently initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. Stephanson was initiated at University of West Florida.

Stephanson is among approximately 25,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation-only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter.

Only the top 10% of seniors and 7.5% of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10% of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify,

as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 325 campuses in the United States, its territories and the Philippines. Its mission is "To recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others."

More about Phi Kappa Phi

Since its founding, more than

1.5 million members have been initiated into Phi Kappa Phi. Some of the organization's notable members include former President Jimmy Carter, NASA astronaut Wendy Lawrence, novelist John Grisham and YouTube co-founder Chad Hurley.

Each year, Phi Kappa Phi awards \$1.3 million to outstanding students and members through graduate and dissertation fellowships, undergraduate study abroad grants, funding for post-baccalaureate development, and grants for local, national and international literacy initiatives.

For more information about Phi Kappa Phi, visit www.phikappaphi.org. (PR)

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 66Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950**Mark Rabago** EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Israel wonders: Whose side is President Biden on?

Hamas officials on Monday rejected the latest cease-fire proposal with Israel. And why not, when the terrorists have friends in high places?

The Biden administration has grown increasingly hostile to America's most important Middle Eastern ally. In recent months, President Joe Biden and his foreign policy brain trust have publicly rebuked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu time and again for daring to defend his nation's right to exist in the face of terrorists who seek to wipe it off the map.

The White House escalated its misguided diplomacy this week when the United States opted to abstain on rather than veto a U.N. Security Council resolution calling for an immediate truce. Notably, the resolution—backed by Russia and China—contained nary a word about Hamas atrocities and the barbaric Oct. 7 attack that precipitated the Israeli offensive.

Biden also dispatched Vice President Kamala Harris to tell ABC News over the weekend that there could be “consequences” for the Jewish state if it carried out a military campaign in Rafah, the last Hamas stronghold.

All of this comes just a week after Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer—no doubt with the blessing of the White House—delivered a remarkable speech on the floor of the upper chamber personally attacking Netanyahu and advocating for his removal.

So this Democratic administration now openly signals to the terrorists that their campaign of death and destruction—their indifference to civilian casualties—has paid dividends. Hamas officials have made it no secret that they hope to create enough international pressure to cow Israel into standing down, thus allowing the terror group to rearm and regroup for future attacks. The president at one time said he supported Israel's goal of destroying Hamas, but he now resolves to leave the nation on an island as it sits on the cusp of finishing off the terrorists.

This endangers Israel, encourages Hamas and fosters more violence and killing in the long run.

Such incoherence arises from the left's political animosity for Netanyahu's conservative government and Biden's fealty to the radical activists within his own party who chant blather about “settler colonialism” as they disparage Israel and give comfort to those who murder in the name of its destruction. The president—petrified of losing progressive votes in swing states such as Michigan—places his own re-election ambitions above the best interests of a steadfast ally that has paid a steep price in blood and treasure. Instead of leading his party, Biden meekly follows.

At one point, the Afghanistan debacle represented this president's foreign policy nadir. But Biden has hit a new low with his administration's decision to undermine Israel as a means of self-preservation.

©2024 Las Vegas Review-Journal



If TikTok is banned, Elon Musk's influence over election will grow

As Congress revisits the notion of banning TikTok over security concerns and potential influence on the 2024 elections, it is crucial to widen our lens to include the equally concerning dynamics at X, formerly Twitter, under Elon Musk's ownership.

Although a forced sale of X, given its U.S. ownership, is not on the table, ignoring the platform's threats simply because of this difference is a grave oversight. I'm a political influencer on X and TikTok, and it is clear to me that should Americans lose access to TikTok, X's role in the digital discourse landscape will only expand.

Musk's tenure at X has been marked by promotion of far-right ideologies, the monetization of disinformation and censorship. Musk has not only promoted figures associated with white supremacy and platforms aligned with Donald Trump but has also banned journalists and enacted policies that stifle dissenting voices. Musk's actions, from promoting divisive content to selectively amplifying voices that align with his views, underscore a troubling trend toward platform manipulation. Though the means of Musk's interference may not be through X's algorithm, the impact on the 2024 election could be just as alarming as TikTok's predicted influence.

Critics of the proposed TikTok “ban” — in actuality, the bill that passed the U.S. House would require a forced sale of the Chinese-owned app — have lauded the transparency of X's algorithm as a solution to concerns over platform manipulation. Consider business magnate Mark Cuban, who tweeted: “My view on #tiktokban — Any social media platform that allows users under 18, must publicly publish their algorithms. There will be plenty of people who will publish how the algos work so parents can be smarter about what their kids are seeing...Just as @X/@elonmusk currently does.”

However, Musk has made clear, simply publishing the algorithm of a social media platform does little to correct its biases. For example, Musk has demanded that the X algorithm overamplify his own posts. Given that Musk's feed is essentially a cesspool of far-right conspiracy theories and disinformation about the national migrant crisis, forcing this content into users' feeds is essentially a massive in-kind donation to Trump's reelection campaign. Algorithm aside, X has also created a monetary incentive for viral disinformation through its new policy of paying “verified” users for engagement.

Of course, Musk has destroyed Twitter's original verification system, now simply selling the infamous blue badges to whoever is willing to pay. While some claim the platform's “Com-

By KAIVAN SHROFF
Chicago Tribune

Kaivan Shroff is the press secretary at the nonprofit Dream for America and the senior adviser for the Institute for Education in Washington.



munity Notes” system, which offers fact-checking and context on misleading posts, addresses some of these issues, here again Musk has weaponized the tool on behalf of far-right extremists. Musk, who has more than 170 million followers on the site, has had Community Note fact-checks removed from his own posts, including a recent tweet falsely claiming that undocumented immigrants vote: “Almost every illegal is a Dem voter.”

Beyond Musk's manual manipulations of his platform, he has also engaged in blatantly hypocritical censorship despite insistence that he is a “free speech absolutist.” X has engaged in selective content deals that promote one-sided viewpoints. Tucker Carlson, a white nationalist and former Fox News host, has a show on the platform. In January, X CEO Linda Yaccarino introduced a slate of other shows that would be launching including ones hosted by Tulsi Gabbard and Don Lemon. Gabbard is reportedly a contender to be Trump's vice presidential pick, and Musk canceled Lemon's show after an interview he did not like. More alarmingly, Musk has taken to banning journalists and famous users who criticize him.

TikTok has become a vital digital space for many political content creators and consumers, especially those who left Twitter following Musk's takeover. With Meta pulling back from political content on Instagram and Threads, X would surely regain its position as a primary source for online election news and discourse if TikTok is no longer in the picture.

There is no doubt that lawmakers are right to worry about the harmful role TikTok could play in the 2024 election. However, scapegoating TikTok will not address the larger issue that our social media landscape is woefully unregulated and controlled by mercurial billionaires.

If TikTok disappears in the near term, we must be realistic about the perhaps even more pernicious role Musk's X will play in this election.

What are the odds of enjoying March Madness now?

Like many Americans, I love March Madness. I still consider the night of March 22, 1990, when my local college team won one of the greatest victories in NCAA basketball tournament history, one of the most exciting moments of my life. Of course, a strong emotional attachment to a particular team isn't the only reason why people love March Madness: The money they have on the line adds an extra thrill. Part of the annual tradition is the office bracket pool—in the age of remote work, it's one of the few things that brings colleagues together.

Now that gambling has taken a dark turn. Since the Supreme Court's 2018 decision ending the prohibition on sports gambling in most states, March Madness betting has become easier and more accessible. As a result, more people are betting not against their coworkers, but through online gambling sites. In fact, per capita wagers on the NCAA tournament are expected to be larger than the Super Bowl this year.

Add it all up, and the outcome is clear: Americans have an unhealthy relationship with risk.

My libertarian impulses are too strong to oppose the legalization of sports gambling. But I am not sure it should be quite so easy to do, either. This gambling boom has been made possible by technology—specifically, the apps on our phones. Not to mention the betting parlors in many professional sports arenas. Now even many universities themselves are promoting gambling on campus.

The amount of money Americans spend gambling has exploded in recent years. Much of it is sports gambling, as casino revenues have not grown nearly as much. Mobile apps and websites accounts for a large share of the boom; 30 states now allow sports betting on mobile sites. It is a \$320 billion business.

It's extraordinary that regulators have allowed gambling to become so accessible. For some people, gambling may be harmless fun, but many others are developing a serious problem—and younger people are a fast-growing segment of problem gamblers.

There are also concerns that there could be more match-fixing.

This lax regulatory attitude is all the more surprising considering the many rules and laws preventing people from taking healthy and productive risks. Americans face many barriers to taking risk in their lives. Decisions such as moving, starting a business, even changing jobs—all are hamstrung by a mess of regulations, on such things as occupational licensing, construction and employer-provided health care. The result? Stagnating wages and an inability for many Americans to get ahead.

And then there are the cultural forces, such as a fetishization of safetyism that makes even low-stakes social interactions feel risky. In almost every realm of business and society, Americans are taking less risk, and being encouraged to do so.

Taking healthy risks—say, starting a business or moving—can create value on both a personal and macroeconomic level. Even investing in the market is productive, because it provides capital to businesses and can pay off handsomely for the investor.

In general, the US has a regulatory structure that deprives Americans of agency and makes it harder for them to take risks that enhance their lives. There is one glaring exception: sports gambling, where the bets are zero-sum and the house usually wins. In a healthy society, it should be easier to invest in the stock market than to bet a fortune on a basketball game.

Odds are that more regulations are coming to sports betting. So far they mostly relate to advertising, though one idea is to ban gambling apps and allow gambling only in physical locations (it seems to be working in Delaware). But as long as states are enjoying the tax revenue that gambling brings, they probably won't do anything very dramatic. Another approach might be for both the states and the federal government to engage in more systemic reform and foster more productive risk-taking.

Sports gambling is as old as civilization, and in small doses it can be enjoyable and improve social cohesion—like that annual office bracket pool. But as with so much else, technology is pushing people to the most extreme outcome. And as sports

By ALLISON SCHRAGER

Bloomberg Opinion

Allison Schrager is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering economics. A senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, she is author of "An Economist Walks Into a Brothel: And Other Unexpected Places to Understand Risk."



gambling has become too big and too easy, more healthy risk-taking has become too rare and too difficult.

Besides which, sports gambling is threatening to ruin one of my sweetest memories, and one of my favorite things about March Madness. Now when I watch someone hit a buzzer-beating shot, I feel a little less joyous, because I can't help thinking about all those people who just lost far more money than they can afford.

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. Joey is the Poet Laureate of Tinian, celebrating 40 years in the CNMI.



Trump just got a break in one case against him. But his luck was running out in another

The courts give, and the courts take away. And in a whirlwind couple of hours on Monday, they took a fair bit more from Donald Trump than they gave him.

The helping hand Trump got from one court, reducing the bond he had to post to protect his empire from a civil fraud penalty, was more than requited by the slap delivered by the judge poised to preside over the first criminal trial of a former president.

Trump got very welcome news Monday morning, when a five-judge panel of New York's Appellate Division modified the bond required to stave off enforcement of the \$454 million judgment that state Attorney General Letitia James secured in his fraud trial. The court cut the bond more than 60%, to \$175 million, and gave Trump 10 additional days to pay, abruptly halting his mad scrounging to meet the harsh terms set by Judge Arthur Engoron.

The relief was not surprising given the division's pro-business bent and the high stakes for Trump's finances. The court could well have calculated that the lesser amount was good enough to ensure payment when the final judgment arrives. And it might be taken as a harbinger that the court is seriously considering reducing the penalty.

The reduced bond, which Trump indicated he would post willingly, serves James' purposes in one respect. If Trump tries to elude collection, the attorney general will be able to immediately scoop up the \$175 million before engaging in any legal combat over other portions of Trump's empire.

Minutes after Trump got this break, however, another New York court convened a hearing that left him far worse off than when the day began.

Judge Juan M. Merchan had called the hearing to determine how much more time Trump needed to prepare his defense against charges of paying off porn star Stormy Daniels in light of material newly produced by federal prosecutors. The judge's conclusion: not much. Merchan scheduled jury selection to begin April 15, suggesting that in one of the four criminal cases Trump faces, his strategy of running out the clock has at last come to an end.

And that wasn't the only way in which the hearing went badly for the defendant.

Trump's team had insisted that they needed at least three months to work through the additional material. And they alleged that the late revelation demonstrated misconduct by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg that necessitated dismissal of the entire case—employing an all too familiar Trumpian gambit of turning a workaday problem into a nefarious deep-state conspiracy.

Merchan was having none of it. The judge excoriated Trump

By HARRY LITMAN

Los Angeles Times

Harry Litman is the host of the "Talking Feds" podcast and the Talking San Diego speaker series. @harrylitman



and his lawyer Todd Blanche for making an "unbelievably serious" allegation without evidence or even a case citation. He also pummeled Blanche, a former federal prosecutor, for waiting so long to subpoena the documents from the U.S. attorney's office.

Directly contradicting the Trump line of argument, Merchan found that the district attorney "went so far above and beyond what they're required to do, it's really odd that we're even here." Worse, he told Blanche that the dispute fit Team Trump's months-long "pattern" of advancing an interpretation of events that "is really different from my interpretation."

Translation from judge-speak: Your motion was so meritless as to be a waste of my time.

That sort of upbraiding from a judge before trial has even begun should chill any trial lawyer to the bone. Credibility before the court is a defense lawyer's most important currency, and Blanche seems to have lost it, perhaps irrevocably. And he has lost it because, like so many of Trump's lawyers, he crafted his advocacy according to the boss' predilections rather than the demands of the case.

Moreover, Merchan's reprimand essentially tears a crucial page out of Trump's very thin playbook. He made it clear that he will not brook wild-eyed claims about government misconduct or selective prosecution.

The judge underscored his resolve to come down hard on such hijinks Tuesday by issuing a limited gag order against Trump. Merchan is likely only to get stricter once a jury is in place, at which point rash accusations could corrupt the proceedings.

Trump has been approaching pretrial appearances as political opportunities to vilify the prosecution. But with an actual jury trial now on the horizon, presided over by a judge whose patience he has exhausted, he will be forced to base his defense on evidence. And as in all his criminal trials, that is the last position he wants to be in.

Each April since 1987, the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence, Inc. has sponsored Alcohol Awareness Month to "increase public awareness and understanding, reduce stigma and encourage local communities to focus on alcoholism and alcohol related issues."

William Oldys, born in 1696 and died April 15, 1761, was an English poet, bibliographer, and antiquarian known to be fastidious in his lifelong task of recording historical data. Biographers of his time state he drank large amounts of alcohol. I have appropriated his rhyme scheme in my poem and pay homage to National Poetry Month and Alcohol Awareness Month.

William Oldys: On a Fly Drinking Out of His Cup

Busy, curious, thirsty fly!
Drink with me and drink as I:
Freely welcome to my cup,
Couldst thou sip and sup it up:
Make the most of life you may,
Life is short and wears away.

Both alike are thine and mine
Hastening quick to their decline:
Thine's a summer, mine's no more,
Though repeated to threescore.
Threescore summers when they're gone
Will appear as short as one!

J. Connolly: On a Guy Drinking Out of His Mind

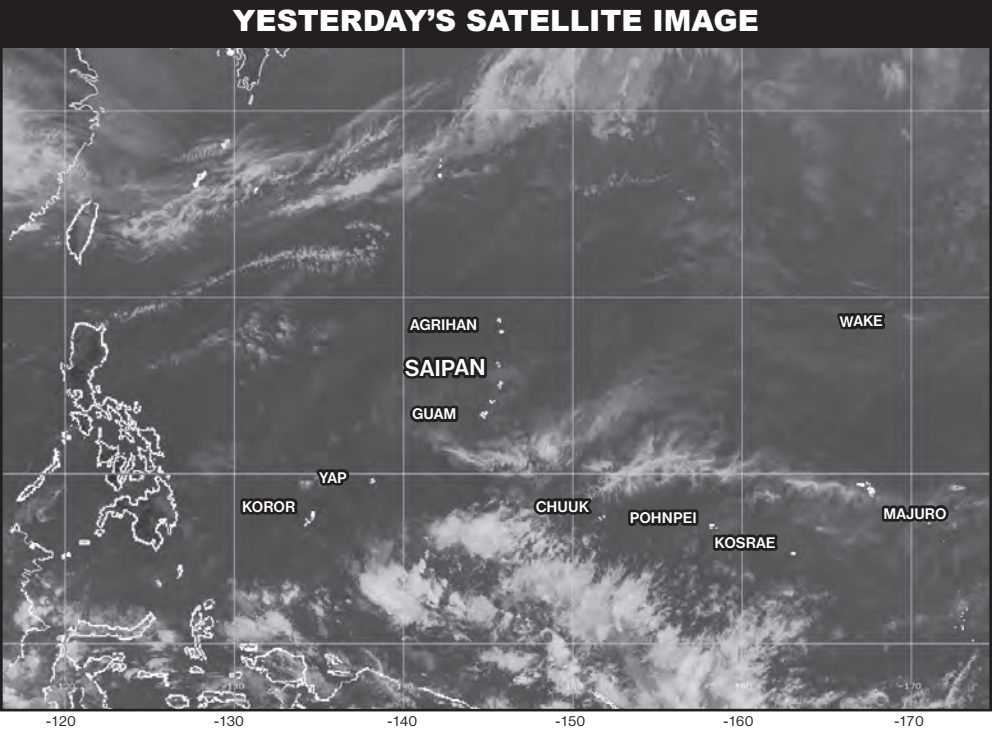
Boozing, serious, thirsty *barfly!
Drunk like me, here's mud in your eye:
Spilling shots from a paper cup,
Cans and bottles just sucking em up.
Drinking throughout the rest of the day,
Your life getting shorter – wasting away.

Cheap shots of whisky, beer, and wine
Hasten us both to a quick decline:
First we sing, then we're a bore,
Round after round, calling out for more.
Your 'happy hour' has come and gone
As you pass out on the way back to the john.

**Barfly is a slang term for a person who spends much time drinking in barrooms.*

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Breezy during the day. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.		Breezy during the day. Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.	
88°	77°	86°	77°	86°	77°	86°	77°	86°	77°



PICTURE TIME: 6:11 AM MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery showing mostly cloudy skies and mainly isolated showers across the Marianas. Latest altimetry data indicating seas of 6 to 8 feet over the coastal waters.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA ▲ ▼ °F		
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 78°
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 80°
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	90° / 80°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	88° / 80°
Pohnpei	Cloudy	84° / 79°
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 79°
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 82°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:11 AM	6:29 PM
Wednesday	6:11 AM	6:29 PM
Thursday	6:10 AM	6:29 PM
Friday	6:09 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:36 AM	11:54 AM	-
Wednesday	1:33 AM	12:56 PM	-
Thursday	2:27 AM	1:59 PM	-
Friday	3:17 AM	3:01 PM	-
Saturday	4:03 AM	4:02 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE ▲ ▼ °F		
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	70° / 59°
Beijing	Fair	70° / 44°
Hong Kong	Light Rain Shower	81° / 77°
Honolulu	Showers	80° / 68°
London	Mostly Cloudy	57° / 41°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	72° / 52°
Manila	Fair	95° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	79° / 54°
Miami	Sunny	78° / 69°
New York	Clear	61° / 47°
Osaka	Fair	72° / 58°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	57° / 43°
Busan	Sunny	66° / 45°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	57° / 39°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	73° / 49°
San Francisco	Sunny	58° / 45°
Seoul	Sunny	65° / 36°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	81° / 55°
Washington, DC	Cloudy	68° / 49°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
2:57 AM	High Tide	1.61
7:36 AM	Low Tide	1.39
11:50 AM	High Tide	1.61
8:02 PM	Low Tide	-0.07

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 1, 2024

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:10AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:25PM	4:10AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Local snack bar Galaxy II opens in Garapan

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

The taste of nostalgia is now closer to residents of central and northern Saipan with the opening of Galaxy II Snack Bar in Garapan last March 4.

Brothers Patrick Jr., 29, and Anthony Tenorio, 32, are heading Galaxy II's second location and they assured that their newest branch offers the same delectable classics found in the Chalan Kanoa branch like their iconic sardine empanadas, glazed donuts, and chicken kelaguen.

"We opened the Garapan location to cater to the middle and northern part of the island. Basically, we sell what Galaxy Snack Bar near William S. Reyes Elementary School sells. We also plan to offer burgers and hotdogs for lunch," said the brothers who also are the cooks and bakers.

Curiously, Galaxy Snack Bar's main clientele continues to be the island's seniors or *man'amko* as they frequent their CK and now Garapan locations quite often. If not themselves, Anthony said, they will ask their younger relatives to buy their favorite snacks for them.

By opening at the back of T Galleria by DFS Saipan and a few minutes' walk from hotel street and the former Paseo De Marianas, the Tenorios also hope to tap into tourist customers.

"A big goal of ours is also to cater to tourist that's why we opened Galaxy II just at the back of T Galleria by DFS," said Anthony, who used to work at a bagel shop in the U.S. mainland.

Like its older brother, Galaxy II also makes everything fresh and they never sell anything from the day before as they assure all their food is sold out everyday.

Anthony said Patrick, who used to work at Panda Express, goes to Galaxy II as early as 2am to prepare their daily food items from scratch everyday. That means Patrick is asleep as early as 7pm and wakes up not-so bright but definitely early at 1am.

And the labor of love is re-



MARK RABAGO

Galaxy II Snack Bar Garapan is located at the back of T Galleria by DFS Saipan.

warded everyday as the Tenorio brothers said they sell out more than 100 sardine empanadas, over 100 glazed donuts, and a little less burgers and chicken kelaguen everyday.

So far, business is doing well and Galaxy II even closes earlier than their 12pm published closing time as they are usually sold out by then. Anthony and Patrick also shared that they've been blown away by

the community's reception so far and that's why they're even striving harder to improve the new location.

"The community is thankful that there's finally a Galaxy Snack Bar that is closer to them. Some customers all the

way from Kagman and Capitol Hill actually drive down to WSR just to go to Galaxy. Opening up a location in Garapan also helps people avoid the traffic especially along Beach Road that is under construction," they said.

Galaxy Snack Bar was founded by the Tenorio brothers' aunt, Dolores Blas Dela Cruz, in the 1970s. Its first location was in Garapan before it moved to the hill just before the Northern Marianas College campus in As Terlaje. That location closed in 2014 before it reopened in Chalan Kanoa three months later.

"We do have childhood memories of the old Galaxy Snack Bar in As Terlaje be-

fore going to school. After my aunt passed, we took over and decided to move to CK," the brothers said.

Galaxy Snack Bar also used to have a Tanapag location right across Tanapag Middle School, but it closed when the building they were renting was sold in 2016.

Aside from having two locations, Galaxy Snack Bar also delivers to nine stores in an effort to reach more customers and be more accessible all throughout the island.

As for the clamor to import their goodies to off-island, Anthony and Patrick said that the idea should be thought of more thoroughly.

"Exporting our items will make us have to change the ingredients because our food is fresh, never frozen. We may have to alter our recipe if we want to freeze and ship it off-island."

The Tenorios are also looking for local vendors to partner with them by selling more local products via consignment basis at Galaxy II Snack Bar.

"If they have any local products they want to sell, we can set up a table inside our location and partner with them and help give tourists a taste of more local food," said Anthony, who along with Patrick co-owns Galaxy Snack Bar together with their other siblings Monique, Cadez, and Peter Mike.

Galaxy II Snack Bar is open Monday-Friday, from 6:30am to 12pm. Their operation is take-out only and for the meantime accepts only cash. For more information or to order in advance, call (670) 233-5542.



MARK RABAGO

Galaxy II Snack Bar is open Monday-Friday, from 6:30am to 12pm.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ube donuts are sold only every Saturday at Galaxy Snack Bar in Chalan Kanoa.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Galaxy II Snack Bar's sardine empanadas.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Galaxy II Snack Bar's glazed donuts.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Kia recalls over 427,000 Telluride SUVs because they might roll away while parked

NEW YORK (AP)—Kia is recalling more than 427,000 of its Telluride SUVs due to a defect that may cause the cars to roll away while they're parked. According to documents published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the intermediate shaft and right front driveshaft of certain 2020-2024 Tellurides may not be fully engaged. Over time, this can lead to "unintended vehicle movement" while the cars are in park—increasing potential crash risks. Kia America decided to recall all 2020-2023 model year and select 2024 model year Tellurides earlier this month, NHTSA documents show. At the time, no injuries or crashes were reported. Improper assembly is suspected to be the cause of the shaft engagement problem—with the recall covering 2020-2024 Tellurides that were

manufactured between Jan. 9, 2019 and Oct. 19, 2023. Kia America estimates that 1% have the defect. To remedy this issue, recall documents say, dealers will update the affected cars' electronic parking brake software and replace any damaged intermediate shafts for free.

New \$20 minimum wage for fast food workers in California set to start

LIVERMORE, Calif. (AP)—Most fast food workers in California will be paid at least \$20 an hour beginning Monday when a new law is scheduled to kick in giving more financial security to an historically low-paying profession while threatening to raise prices in a state already known for its high cost of living. Democrats in the state Legislature passed the law last year in part as an acknowledgement that many of the more than 500,000 people who work in fast food restaurants are not teenagers earning some spend-

ing money, but adults working to support their families. That includes immigrants like Ingrid Vilorio, who said she started working at a McDonald's shortly after arriving in the United States in 2019. Fast food was her full-time job until last year. Now, she works about eight hours per week at a Jack in the Box while working other jobs. "The \$20 raise is great. I wish this would have come sooner," Vilorio said through a translator. "Because I would not have been looking for so many other jobs in different places."

Romania, Bulgaria partially join Europe's Schengen travel zone, but checks at land borders remain

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP)—Romania and Bulgaria partially joined Europe's ID-check-free travel zone on Sunday, marking a new step in the two countries' integration with the European Union. After years of negotia-

tions to join the Schengen area, there is now free access for travelers arriving by air or sea from both countries. However, land border checks will remain in place due to opposition primarily from Austria which has long blocked their bid over illegal migration concerns. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen hailed the change as a "huge success for both countries" and a "historic moment" for what is the world's largest free travel zone. The Schengen Area was established in 1985. Before Bulgaria and Romania's admission, it was comprised of 23 of the 27 EU member countries, along with Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Around 3.5 million people cross an internal border each day. Austria vetoed Romania and Bulgaria's admission into the Schengen zone at the end of 2022 but allowed Croatia full accession. Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007 and Croatia in 2013.

Nation

Trump's immigration rhetoric resonates with some Democrats

WASHINGTON (AP)—The video shared by Donald Trump features horror movie music and footage of migrants purportedly entering the U.S. from countries including Cameroon, Afghanistan and China. Shots of men with tattoos and videos of violent crime are set against close-ups of people waving and wrapping themselves in American flags.

"They're coming by the thousands," Trump says in the video, posted on his social media site. "We will secure our borders. And we will restore sovereignty."

In his speeches and online posts, Trump has ramped up anti-immigrant rhetoric, casting migrants as dangerous criminals "poisoning the blood" of America. His messaging often relies on falsehoods about migration, but it has proved attractive to many core supporters going back a decade, to when "build the wall" rang out at his campaign rallies.

President Joe Biden and his allies portray the situation as a policy dispute that Congress can fix and hits Republicans in Washington for backing away from a border security deal after facing criticism from Trump.

But in a potentially worrying sign for the Democrat, Trump's message appears to be resonating with key elements of the coalition that Biden will need to win over in November.

Roughly two-thirds of

Americans now disapprove of how Biden is handling border security, including about 4 in 10 Democrats, 55% of Black adults and 73% of Hispanic adults, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted in March.

A recent Pew Research Center poll found that 45% of Americans described the situation as a crisis, while another 32% said it was a major problem.

Vetress Boyce, a Chicago-based racial justice activist, was among those who expressed frustration with Biden's immigration policies and the city's approach as it tries to shelter newly arriving migrants. She argued that Democrats should focus on economic investment in Black communities, not newcomers.

"They're sending us people who are starving, the same way Blacks are starving in this country. They're sending us people who want to escape the conditions and come here for a better lifestyle when the ones here are suffering and have been suffering for over 100 years," Boyce said. "That recipe is a mixture for disaster. It's a disaster just waiting to happen."

Gracie Martinez is a 52-year-old Hispanic small business owner from Eagle Pass, Texas, the border town that Trump visited in February when he and Biden made same-day trips to the state. Martinez said she

once voted for former President Barack Obama and is still a Democrat, but now backs Trump—mainly because of the border.

"It's horrible," she said. "It's tons and tons of people and they're giving them medical and money, phones," she said, complaining those who went through the legal immigration system are treated worse.

Priscilla Hesles, 55, a teacher who lives in Eagle Pass, described the current situation as "almost an overtaking" that had changed the town.

"We don't know where they're hiding. We don't know where they've infiltrated into and where are they going to come out of," said Hesles, who said she used to take an evening walk to a local church, but stopped after she was shaken by an encounter with a group of men she alleged were migrants.

The president's reelection campaign recently launched a \$30 million ad campaign targeting Latino audiences in key swing states that includes a digital ad in English and Spanish highlighting Trump's past description of Mexican immigrants as "criminals" and "rapists."

The White House has mulled a series of executive actions that could drastically tighten immigration restrictions, effectively going around Congress after it failed to pass the bipartisan deal Biden endorsed.

Crews at Baltimore bridge collapse continue work of removing twisted steel and concrete

BALTIMORE (AP)—As divers assisted crews with the complicated and meticulous operation of removing the steel and concrete from the fallen Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, some near the site took time on Easter Sunday to reflect on the six workers presumed to have plunged to their deaths.

As cranes periodically swung into place and workers measured and cut the steel to prepare to lift sections of twisted steel, Rev. Ako Walker held a Mass in Spanish at Sacred Heart of Jesus, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) up the Patapsco River from the collapse.

"Yes we can rebuild a bridge, but we have to look at the way in which migrant workers are treated and how best we can improve their situation as they come to the United States of America," Walker said of the men who were from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador and were patching potholes.

Dive teams were in the river

Sunday surveying parts of the bridge underwater and checking on the ship to ensure it can be safely floated away once the wreckage is lifted. Workers in lifts used torches earlier to cut parts of the twisted steel superstructure above water.

The bridge fell early Tuesday as the crew of the cargo ship Dali lost power and control. They called in a mayday, which allowed just enough time for police to stop vehicles from getting on the bridge, but not enough time to get a crew of eight workers off the structure.

Two workers survived, two bodies were found in a submerged pickup and four more men are presumed dead. Weather conditions and the tangled debris underwater have made it too dangerous for divers to search for their bodies.

Each part of the bridge removed from the water will be lifted onto a barge and floated downstream to the Tradeport Atlantic logistics center, where it will be inspected,

Coast Guard Rear Adm. Shannon Gilreath said.

Everything the salvage crews do affects what happens next and ultimately how long it will take to remove all the debris and reopen the ship channel and the blocked Port of Baltimore, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore said.

It can also alter the course of the National Transportation Safety Board investigation, which Moore said is important to ensure this doesn't happen again.

"We need to have answers on what happened. We need to know who should be accountable for this. And we need to make sure we're holding them accountable," Moore said Sunday on CNN.

The crew of the Dali, which is as long as the Eiffel Tower is tall, remains onboard the ship. The vessel is tangled in 3,000 to 4,000 tons of debris. Most of its containers remain intact, but some were torn open or knocked away by the falling debris.

World

TO INCREASE PRESSURE ON NETANYAHU

Israelis stage largest protest since war began



AP
People run away from police during a protest against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government and call for the release of hostages held in the Gaza Strip by the Hamas militant group outside of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, in Jerusalem, Sunday, March 31, 2024.

JERUSALEM (AP)—Tens of thousands of Israelis thronged central Jerusalem on Sunday in the largest anti-government protest since the country went to war in October. Protesters urged the government to reach a cease-fire deal to free dozens of hostages held in Gaza by Hamas militants and to hold early elections.

Israeli society was broadly united immediately after Oct. 7, when Hamas killed some 1,200 people during a cross-border attack and took 250 others hostage. Nearly six months of conflict have renewed divisions over the leadership of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, though the country remains largely in favor of the war.

Netanyahu has vowed to destroy Hamas and bring all the hostages home, yet those goals have been elusive. While Hamas has suffered heavy losses, it remains intact.

Roughly half the hostages

in Gaza were released during a weeklong cease-fire in November. But attempts by international mediators to bring home the remaining hostages have failed. Talks resumed on Sunday with no signs that a breakthrough was imminent.

Hostages' families believe time is running out, and they are getting more vocal about their displeasure with Netanyahu.

"We believe that no hostages will come back with this government because they're busy putting sticks in the wheels of negotiations for the hostages," said Boaz Atzili, whose cousin, Aviv Atzili and his wife, Liat, were kidnapped on Oct. 7. Liat was released but Aviv was killed, and his body is in Gaza. "Netanyahu is only working in his private interests."

Protesters blame Netanyahu for the failures of Oct. 7 and say the deep political divisions over his attempted

judicial overhaul last year weakened Israel ahead of the attack. Some accuse him of damaging relations with the United States, Israel's most important ally.

Netanyahu is also facing a litany of corruption charges which are slowly making their way through the courts, and critics say his decisions appear to be focused on political survival over the national interest. Opinion polls show Netanyahu and his coalition trailing far behind their rivals if elections were held today.

Unless his governing coalition falls apart sooner, Netanyahu won't face elections until spring of 2026.

Many families of hostages had refrained from publicly denouncing Netanyahu to avoid antagonizing the leadership and making the hostages' plight a political issue. But as their anger grows, some now want to change course—and they played a major role in Sunday's anti-government protest.

US military says it destroyed Houthi drones over the Red Sea and in Yemen

CAIRO (AP)—The U.S. military said Sunday its forces destroyed one unmanned aerial vehicle in a Houthi rebel-held area of war-ravaged Yemen and another over a crucial shipping route in the Red Sea. It was the latest development in months of tension between the Iran-backed rebels and the U.S.

The drones, which were destroyed Saturday morning, posed a threat to U.S. and coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region, said the

U.S. Central Command.

It said that one drone was destroyed over the Red Sea, while the second was destroyed on the ground as it was prepared to launch.

"These actions are necessary to protect our forces, ensure freedom of navigation, and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels," CENTCOM said.

There was no comment from the Houthi rebels, which

control much of Yemen's north and west.

The rebels launched a campaign of drone and missile attacks on shipping in the Red Sea in November. They have also fired missiles toward Israel, although those have largely fallen short or been intercepted.

The rebels have described their campaign as an effort to pressure Israel to end its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The ships targeted by the Houthis, however, largely have had little or no connection to Israel, the U.S. or other nations involved in the war.

Life & Style

'Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire' roars to an \$80 million box office opening

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Godzilla-King Kong combo stomped on expectations as "Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire" roared to an \$80 million opening on 3,861 North American screens, according to Sunday studio estimates.

The monster merger from Warner Bros. and Legendary Pictures starring Rebecca Hall and Brian Tyree Henry brought the second-highest opening in what has been a robust year, falling just short of the the \$81.5 million debut of "Dune: Part 2."

Projections had put the the opening weekend of "Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire," which sees the monsters teaming up instead of squaring up, at closer to \$50 million.

"It's a cinematic event, and we're seeing these iconic characters doing things we've never seen them do before," said Mary Parent, chairman of worldwide production for Legendary. "There's big swaths of the film that don't have any



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Godzilla, left, and Kong in a scene from "Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire."

dialogue, where we put you with the characters, it's a very mythic experience."

Last week's No. 1 at the box office, "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire," was second with \$15.7 million for a two-week total of \$73.4 million.

"Dune: Part Two" stayed strong in its fifth week, falling in the third spot with an \$11.1 million take and a domestic total of \$252.4 million.

The last matchup of the two monsters from Warner Bros. and Legendary, 2021's

"Godzilla vs. Kong," had a much smaller opening weekend of \$48.5 million, but for

a film slowed by the coronavirus pandemic and released simultaneously on HBO Max, it was a serious success that signaled what was to come for the pairing.

"It was a really big number all things considered," Parent said.

The newer film had the second biggest opening of the studios' broader MonsterVerse franchise. "Godzilla" brought in \$93.2 million in 2014. It was the biggest earner in the nearly 70-year cinematic history of the creature that originated and spent most of its screen life in Japan. It earned more than \$200 million in North America and more than \$500 million globally.

"Godzilla x Kong" comes just four months after the most recent Japanese rendition, the critical favorite and Oscar win-

ner "Godzilla Minus One."

But there was clearly no Godzilla glut for audiences, many of whom were willing to pay extra for IMAX and other special formats.

"These are literally two of the biggest movie stars in the world, and you have to see them on the biggest screen possible with the biggest sound possible," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for data firm Comscore.

The combination of "Godzilla x Kong," "Dune Part Two" and "Ghostbusters" has put the year to date 6 percent behind 2023, while it was 20 percent behind on the eve of the March 1 release of "Dune."

"The industry was feeling pretty glum right before 'Dune Part 2' opened, but they've made up a lot of ground," said Dergarabedian.

UK counterterrorism police investigate an attack on an Iranian TV presenter outside his London home

LONDON (AP)—British counterterrorism police are investigating the stabbing of an Iranian television presenter outside his home in London as concern grows over threats to a Farsi-language satellite news channel long critical of Iran's theocratic government.

Pouria Zeraati, a presenter at London-based Iran International, was stabbed in the leg Friday afternoon and is in stable condition at a hospital, the station said. His condition is not believed to be life-threatening.

London's Metropolitan Po-

lice Service said Zeraati's occupation, together with recent threats to U.K.-based Iranian journalists, triggered the counterterrorism probe, even though the motivation for the attack is still unclear.

"While we continue to assess the circumstances of this incident, detectives are following a number of lines of inquiry and our priority at this time is to try and identify whoever was behind this attack and to arrest them," Commander Dominic Murphy, head of the Met's Counter Terrorism Command,

said in a statement.

"I appreciate the wider concern this incident may cause—particularly amongst others in similar lines of work, and those from Iranian communities."

Iran International spokesman Adam Baillie said the stabbing was "hugely frightening." Although the channel's journalists have been threatened in the past, this is the first attack of its kind, Baillie told the BBC.

"It was a shocking, shocking incident, whatever the outcome of an investigation reveals," he said.

Chance Perdomo, star of 'Chilling Adventures of Sabrina' and 'Gen V,' dies in motorcycle crash at 27

Actor Chance Perdomo, who rose to fame as a star of "Chilling Adventures of Sabrina" and "Gen V," has died at age 27 following a motorcycle crash.

"On behalf of the family and his representatives, it is with heavy hearts that we share the news of Chance Perdomo's untimely passing as a result of a motorcycle accident," a publicist said in a statement issued Saturday evening.

The statement said no one else was involved in the crash. No details about the crash, including when and where it took place, were immediately released.

Perdomo most recently played Andre Anderson on the first season of "Gen V," the college-centric spin-off of Amazon Prime's hit series "The Boys," set in a universe where superheroes are celebrities—and behave as badly as the most notorious. Perdomo's character was a student at Godolkin University, founded by the sinisterly omnipresent Vought International corporation, where "supes" train; his power involved the manipulation of metal.

Amazon MGM Studios and Sony Pictures Television, the makers of "Gen V," said the show's family was "devastated by the sudden passing." (AP)



This undated photo provided by Shelter PR shows Chance Perdomo. Perdomo, who rose to fame as a star of "Chilling Adventures of Sabrina" and "Gen V," has died at age 27, following a motorcycle crash, his publicist said, Saturday, March 30, 2024.

Wife withdraws from life she's built over decades

DEAR ABBY: After 28 years, my wife left me "to find herself." She says she doesn't want a divorce; she just needs time and space to work on herself, but she also wants to work on our marriage. She doesn't want to talk, text or contact me.

My question is, how are we supposed to work on our marriage with no contact? What am I supposed to do? I love her, but she's avoiding me and everyone else, including her friends and family. All she wants to do is work and be alone in her apartment.

LONELY IN THE EAST

DEAR LONELY: When you asked how your wife plans to work on your marriage if you aren't seeing each other or communicating (or utilizing marriage counseling), you asked a pertinent question. She cannot have it both ways, nor does she seem open to repairing what drove her to leave your marriage.

Ask if she is interested in counseling. If she isn't, PLEASE get a referral to a therapist for emotional support for yourself right now. If you do, you will more quickly be able to figure out what your next steps should be.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Two of my children contracted pink eye. We were assured by the doctor that after being on antibiotics for 24 hours, they would no longer be contagious. Feeling reassured, we isolated them for 24 hours and went about our

plans to visit family as originally scheduled.

I later learned that a few days after we left, three of my nephews, whom my sons played with often, all came down with pink eye. I have apologized, but I still feel guilty. We did everything the doctors recommended, yet we still gave it to others. Is there anything else I can do to make up for it?

PINK WITH GUILT

DEAR PINK: A large box of chocolates might sweeten the bitter aftertaste of your visit to that family. Or, go online and search for "Ice Cream of the Month Club." If you do, you will find several companies that guarantee frozen deliveries nationwide. Include a message on the card, "Apologies for the pink eye." (And be sure one of the flavors is strawberry to reinforce your sentiments.)

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am a 14-year-old boy living with my parents. Due to religious constraints, I was not going to be allowed to date until I turned 16. That policy has recently changed, although my parents are still holding me to it.

My problem is, there's this girl. She's my sister's best friend. I met her when she came to hang out with my sister. I'm afraid if I wait, she'll fall out of my life. Also, I am afraid that it will be awkward with my sister. What should I do?

LOVESICK IN UTAH

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR LOVESICK: Your parents are enforcing those rules and, at least for now, you need to abide by them. If this girl is friendly with your sister, she's not going to drop out of your life. That's why, if you are as smart as I think you are, you will make an effort to simply be "friends" with her. Just friends. If you do, as you get to know each other better, you may form a more lasting relationship than if you were to make a move on her now. I wish you luck.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

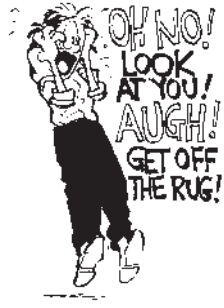
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

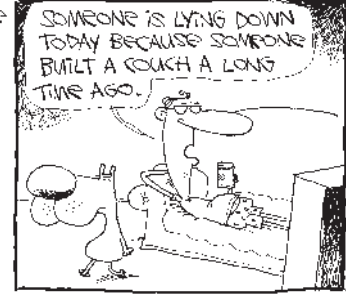
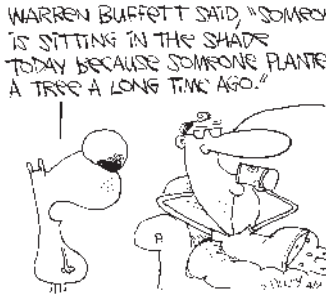
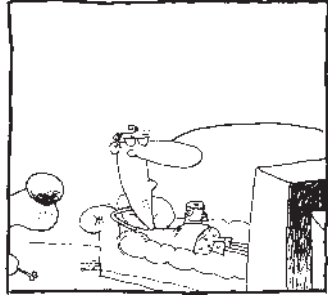


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Norwegian saint 5 Spasm 8 Grate 12 Nevada casino city 13 "— was saying ..." 14 Flightless birds 15 Open car 17 Actress Kunis 18 Sportage maker 19 Below-average grade 21 En-treaties 24 Calendar abbr. 25 Has the flu 26 Gallup employee 30 Molokai memento 31 Lash — (berate) 32 Vitamin stat 33 Semisoft cheese 35 Fashion line?

36 Grad works 37 Angelou's PC 41 Chit 42 Jai — 43 Prank puller 48 Couturier rival 49 Small bill 50 Corn servings 51 Harrow 52 Frilly wrap 53 Food regimen

3 Navarro of "The View" 4 Bloody Mary spirits 5 "See ya!" 6 British verb ending 7 Ring-shaped 8 Lax 9 Whita-ker's Oscar-winning role 10 "Star Trek" helms-man 11 Unpaid TV ads (Abbr.)

16 Malia, to Sasha 20 Thaw 21 Coconut provider 22 Stead 23 Writer Wiesel 24 Sacred symbol 26 Decep-tion 27 Nest setting 28 Dutch export 29 Farm fathers 31 Capital on a fjord 34 Country 35 Blotto 37 "The Bells" writer 38 Lingerie trim 39 Oodles 40 Designer Rabanne 41 Furniture brand 44 Lennon's love 45 — chi 46 Before 47 Letters after Q

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-2

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Michael Fassbender, 47; Christopher Meloni, 63; Emmylou Harris, 77; Linda Hunt, 79.

Happy Birthday: Control, discipline and drive will get you where you want to go this year. Too much spare time will allow outsiders to take advantage of you. Rely on yourself and your efforts to ensure you get the most out of life. Launching your plans will bring more satisfaction than taking orders and giving your all for someone else's benefit. Use your skills wisely. Your numbers are 4, 12, 17, 26, 33, 39, 45.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Gather facts and determine what's best for you. Take care of your responsibilities and protect your reputation and position. Expand your options by updating skills and applying for positions that interest you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Be open to suggestions but resourceful in determining how the information you receive will unfold. If you take on too much or lack organizational skills, you will fall behind and require clarification. Change looks inviting.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Upgrades are essential to maintaining your position or advancing your pursuits. Don't expect everyone to offer an accurate point of view. Ask questions, go directly to the source and leave no room for error.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Learn all you can and share what you know. Wisdom, clarity and physically displaying what you offer will give you plenty of support. A

partnership will help you more than you anticipate if you choose someone whose assets compensate for your weaknesses.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You have the skills, knowledge and energy to tap into something that brings you joy. Change what you don't like, open doors to new beginnings and trust yourself to go in the right direction instead of letting someone else choose for you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Participate in an event that broadens your awareness and teaches you how to do something that interests you. A unique relationship with someone with something to offer will encourage you to pivot in a desirable direction.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Be a good listener and discover what you can do to make someone's life easier. A kind gesture can do as much for you as it does for the person you help. Consider what you want and map out a plan that endorses positive change.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take the plunge, follow your heart and invest in yourself. A change will lift your spirits and point you in a direction that gives you hope for a brighter future. Networking, social activities and sharing thoughts and visions will lead to self-improvement.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Stick to what you know, and stay within script. Accurate information will help you instill confidence in others that you know what you are doing. Don't put up with interference or manipulative

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



people. Honesty is the best policy.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Use your imagination, and you'll develop many unique ideas that transform what you have to offer. Reinventing yourself and how you display your talents to be diverse and applicable to a fast-changing global economy will pave the way to exciting prospects.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't fold under pressure. Use your ingenuity to discover how to overcome a financial barrier. Expert advice will pique your imagination and motivate you to turn something you enjoy doing into a lucrative side project.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't hesitate. It's up to you to make things happen. Choose to put your energy into addressing how you make and use your money. Set up a savings plan that encourages a debt-free future. Distance yourself from people who encourage you to overspend.

Birthday Baby: You are demonstrative, influential and resourceful. You are diligent and motivated.

• Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. • You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. • Focus and you'll reach your goals. • Aim high; start new projects. • Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	1	7	9	6	8		2	
	2	1		4	6		8	
	8	6		7	2			
	7		6		5			4
8				4	1		6	9
6	2						1	
			3	4	5			
1	4			8	7			
2		8		1	6		9	

Difficulty: ★★

4/2

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	1	2	4	5	6	8	3	9
3	4	5	8	9	2	7	1	6
8	9	6	1	3	7	4	5	2
1	3	7	5	6	4	9	2	8
9	2	8	3	7	1	6	4	5
5	6	4	2	8	9	3	7	1
4	7	1	9	2	8	5	6	3
6	8	3	7	1	5	2	9	4
2	5	9	6	4	3	1	8	7

Difficulty: ★

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SHAZAM APP

Solution: 9 letters

B	R	I	D	G	E	N	O	H	P	O	R	C	I	M
U	A	V	O	C	A	L	A	N	I	G	I	R	O	O
T	D	N	O	I	S	R	E	V	A	S	L	V	N	B
T	I	Y	D	O	L	E	M	S	S	T	I	E	L	I
O	O	M	E	S	I	O	N	I	R	E	B	N	I	L
N	E	S	E	T	O	N	T	N	Y	N	R	U	N	E
O	D	M	M	U	S	I	C	G	O	O	A	T	E	E
I	A	T	U	S	T	D	O	C	E	E	R	I	A	Z
S	T	N	K	L	H	L	I	D	M	I	Y	N	S	I
I	A	U	E	C	O	U	I	S	D	H	N	T	P	N
V	B	O	G	N	I	V	F	S	C	R	O	R	E	G
E	A	C	H	S	O	L	O	F	T	O	O	O	A	O
L	S	C	O	N	N	E	C	T	L	E	V	C	K	C
E	E	A	D	V	E	R	T	I	S	E	N	E	E	E
T	N	E	M	N	I	A	T	R	E	T	N	E	R	R

© 2024 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 4/2

Account, Advertise, Bridge, Button, Click, Connect, Database, Discover, Entertainment, Hook, Icon, Intro, Library, Listen, Melody, Microphone, Mobile, Movie, Music, Noise, Notes, Online, Original, Radio, Recognize, Record, Save, Shuffle, Sing, Solo, Speaker, Technology, Television, Time, Title, Tune, Version, Video, Vocal, Volume Yesterday's Answer: Thailand To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 62 through 77, order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Overtaken third out on replay leads to a 5-4 Phillies win over Braves



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Trea Turner

capitalized on a third out overturned on replay with a tying single and Alec Bohm drove in the two runs in the seventh inning to rally the Philadelphia Phillies over the Atlanta Braves 5-4 on Sunday.

The win settled some nerves among the grumbling sports faithful in Philly after Atlanta decisively won the first two games.

Atlanta was on course for a three-game sweep until a replay review in the seventh denied the Braves a third out.

Leading 3-2 behind a strong outing from Chris Sale in his Braves' debut, reliever Aaron Bummer (0-1) seemingly got Johan Rojas to ground into an inning-ending double play.

But a second look showed Rojas was safe and overturned the call by first base umpire Clint Vondrak, and the third straight sellout crowd roared in approval.

ANGELS 4, ORIOLES 1

BALTIMORE (AP)—Reid Detmers gave the Angels some much-needed effectiveness on the mound, allowing one run in five innings to help Los Angeles avoid a season-opening sweep with a win over Baltimore.

The Angels were outscored 24-7 in their first two games against Baltimore, which prompted a team meeting after Saturday's 13-4 loss. Then Detmers (1-0) took the mound and quieted the Orioles, and Los Angeles scored two runs in each of the first two innings.

Taylor Ward hit a two-run homer to open the scoring, and although Tyler Wells (0-1) made it through six innings—and did not allow a baserunner after the second—the damage was done.

BLUE JAYS 9, RAYS 2

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Justin Turner homered and drove in four runs as Toronto gained a spit of a four-game series by beating Tampa Bay.

After winning the opener 8-1 on Thursday, the Blue Jays were outscored 13-3 in losing the next two games. Toronto is 20-35 in road games against Tampa Bay since the start of the 2018 season.

Randy Arozarena homered for the Rays. He also went deep in Saturday's 5-1 win.

Toronto ace Kevin Gausman, on a pitch count after not making his spring training debut until March 25 because of shoulder fatigue, allowed one run, two hits and struck out six in 4 1/3 innings. The right-hander threw 48 of 69 pitches for strikes.

BREWERS 4, NY METS 1

NEW YORK (AP)—Jackson Chourio hit an RBI double for his career extra-base hit and helped Collin Rea (1-0) escape a bases-loaded jam



Philadelphia Phillies' Alec Bohm watches his RBI single off Atlanta Braves' Aaron Bummer during the sixth inning of a baseball game, Sunday, March 31, 2024, in Philadelphia.

as Milwaukee beat the winless New York Mets.

Brewers slugger Rhys Hoskins went 0 for 4 a day after Mets reliever Yohan Ramirez intentionally threw at him. Ramirez, who is appealing a three-game suspension, struck out Hoskins with the bases loaded in the fifth.

It is the first 0-3 start for New York since 2014.

Willy Adames and rookie Oliver Dunn each hit a run-scoring single as Milwaukee got off to its first 3-0 start since 2018. William Contreras added an RBI double and Brice Turang scored twice to help Milwaukee to its second sweep in New York and first since 2011.

ROYALS 11, TWINS 0

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Bobby Witt Jr. finished a double shy of the cycle, Kyle Isbel and Maikel Garcia hit back-to-back home runs, and Kansas City routed Minnesota 11-0 to avoid a second straight season-opening sweep by the Twins.

Salvador Perez hit a three-run homer and finished with four RBIs, and Nelson Velázquez had the last of five homers for Kansas City, which gave Brady Singer (1-0) plenty of run support on a day in which he hardly needed it.

Singer, trying to bounce back from a rough 2023, allowed only three hits and a walk over seven innings. He struck out 10.

Bailey Ober (0-1) retired just four batters for Minnesota, allowing eight runs on nine hits and a walk. Kody Funderburk wasn't much better, allowing two more runs on three hits and a walk while retiring five.

REDS 6, NATIONALS 3

CINCINNATI (AP)—Will Benson and Christian Encarnacion-Strand hit back-to-back home runs with two outs in the ninth inning, lifting Cincinnati to a series-clinch-

ing win over Washington.

Cincinnati trailed 5-3 when Jonathan India hit a two-out double off Kyle Finnegan (0-1). Benson drove a first-pitch splitter to straightaway center. Encarnacion-Strand swung over a low splitter, then drove an up splitter 387 feet into the left-field seats for his first hit in 13 at-bats this season as the Reds streamed out of their dugout to celebrate.

Lucas Sims (1-0) retired three straight batters in the ninth.

PIRATES 9, MARLINS 7, 10 INNINGS

MIAMI (AP)—Oneil Cruz raced home on Jason Delay's bunt in the 10th inning, and Pittsburgh beat Miami for a four-game sweep of their season-opening series.

Cruz opened the 10th on second as a pinch runner for Rowdy Tellez. He advanced to third when reliever Tanner Scott (0-1) committed an error on Alik Williams' sacrifice attempt.

Delay then sent another bunt toward first and Cruz beat first baseman Jake Burger's throw to the plate. Ke'Bryan Hayes reached on a two-out infield single and Michael A. Taylor gave Pittsburgh a 9-7 lead with a bases-loaded walk.

Miami had runners on the corners with no outs in the bottom half. But Hunter Stratton retired Burger, Bryan De La Cruz and Jazz Chisholm Jr. for his first career save.

YANKEES 4, ASTROS 3

HOUSTON (AP)—Juan Soto had three hits capped by an RBI single with two outs in the ninth inning that lifted the New York Yankees to a win that completed an opening four-game sweep of Houston.

With the score 3-3, Gleyber Torres singled off closer Josh Hader (0-1) with two outs in the ninth inning and stole second base. Soto then singled on a line

drive to left field.

Soto hit .529 (9 for 17) with four RBIs in his first games with the Yankees after his trade from San Diego, helping New York to its first 4-0 start since 2003 and just its fourth since 1950.

TIGERS 3, WHITE SOX 2

CHICAGO (AP)—Jack Flaherty pitched six effective innings in his Detroit debut and Andy Ibáñez snapped a tie with a pinch-hit single in the ninth, sending the Tigers to a victory over the Chicago White Sox.

Kerry Carpenter and Jake Rogers homered for the Tigers, who are 3-0 for the first time since 2016. Each of their wins in their season-opening series at Chicago was decided by one run.

Paul DeJong and Korey Lee went deep for the White Sox.

Tyler Holton (1-0) got the win by striking out four in 1 1/3 innings. Jason Foley got Andrew Vaughn and Braden Shewmake to ground out to earn his second save.

CUBS 9, RANGERS 5

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Ian Happ tied his career high with four hits and drew a tie-breaking bases-loaded walk from José Leclerc in a four-run ninth inning, helping the Chicago Cubs beat Texas to salvage the finale of their opening three-game series.

With the score 4-4, Leclerc (0-1) walked Michael Busch with one out, allowed Nico Hoerner's swinging-bunt single down the third-base line and walked Mike Tauchman.

Miles Mastrobuoni grounded into a forceout at the plate, Happ walked on a full-count fastball that sailed wide and Seiya Suzuki greeted Jacob Latz with a two-run single. Cody Bellinger singled in the final run.

Héctor Neris (1-0) pitched a one-hit eighth.

Texas pitchers walked nine while allowing eight hits.

DIAMONDBACKS 5, ROCKIES 1

PHOENIX (AP)—Christian Walker hit a two-run homer, Brandon Pfaadt pitched five solid innings and Arizona beat Colorado.

The D-backs won three of four games in the season-opening series for both teams.

Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit an RBI single and Walker ripped his two-run homer to left in the first, lifting the Diamondbacks to a 3-0 lead. Gurriel continued a torrid start to the season; he has three homers, two doubles and 10 RBIs over four games.

The D-backs made it 5-1 with two runs in the fifth after a costly miscue by Colorado's Nolan Jones led to two unearned runs. There were two outs when Ketel Marte lofted a routine fly ball to left, but Jones simply dropped it, which allowed Tucker Barnhart to score.

RED SOX 5, MARINERS 1

SEATTLE (AP)—Enmanuel Valdez hit a three-run homer, Garrett Whitlock pitched five effective innings and Boston beat Seattle.

Valdez, a fill-in second baseman for the injured Vaughn Grissom, hit a drive to right in the fourth after starting the season 0 for 8.

Tyler O'Neill connected for a solo shot in the second against Seattle's Bryce Miller (0-1), who was charged with four runs and six hits in five innings.

Whitlock (1-0) helped Boston to a split of the four-game series after it dropped two straight one-run games. The big right-hander allowed three hits, struck out eight and walked none.

ATHLETICS 4, GUARDIANS 3

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—

Pinch-hitter Abraham Toro forced in the game-ending run when he drew a four-pitch bases-loaded walk from Eli Morgan, and Oakland beat Cleveland for their first win this season.

The A's, who have announced plans to move to Las Vegas in 2028, drew just 4,118 at the Coliseum on a sunny afternoon. Attendance for the opening four-game series totaled 26,902.

Oakland and manager Mark Kotsay lost three of four to the Guardians. The A's went 60-102 in Kotsay's first season in 2022, then 50-112 last year.

Carlos Carrasco returned to Cleveland's rotation after three seasons with the New York Mets, allowing three runs and six hits in five innings. The 37-year-old right-hander was 88-73 for Cleveland from 2009-20.

Oakland's Paul Blackburn allowed three hits in shutout innings and Cleveland tied the score on Josh Naylor's RBI single that capped a three-run eighth. Two runs were unearned because of shortstop Nick Allen's error at shortstop.

PADRES 13, GIANTS 4

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Luis Campusano and Ha-Seong Kim hit three-run homers, and San Diego routed San Francisco for an opening four-game split.

Patrick Bailey had a run-scoring passed ball and Manny Machado an RBI double in a five-run first inning. Campusano followed with a drive into the first-row seats near the right-field foul pole off Daulton Jeffries (0-1), who made his first big league start since 2022.

Campusano added a run-scoring single for his fourth RBI, and Machado drove in three runs. Wearing camouflage uniforms on the season's first Military Sunday, the Padres out-hit the Giants 16-5.

Kim homered into the second deck of the Western Metal Supply Co. building beyond the left-field wall for a 9-0 lead in the second.

DODGERS 5, CARDINALS 4

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Max Muncy hit a two-run homer to right field with one out in the eighth inning, and the Los Angeles Dodgers rallied from a four-run deficit to beat St. Louis.

Teoscar Hernández had two hits and drove in two runs as the Dodgers took three of four in the series.

St. Louis rookie Victor Scott II reached base three times and scored two runs while Paul Goldschmidt and Brendan Donovan both had two RBIs.

Los Angeles trailed 4-2 going into the bottom of the eighth before coming back. Hernández got the Dodgers within a run with his third homer of the season, a solo shot off to left-center off Andre Pallante.

Mavericks end Rockets 11-game win streak, 125-107



HOUSTON (AP)—Luka Doncic had 47 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists, Kyrie Irving added 24 points and seven assists, and the Dallas Mavericks won their seventh straight and snapped the Houston Rockets' 11-game winning streak with a 125-107 victory on Sunday night.

Doncic scored 32 points in the first half on 12-of-18 shooting, going 6 of 10 on 3-pointers, as the Mavs led 66-45. Doncic had 22 in the first quarter alone and finished 18 of 30 from the field, including 9 of 16 on 3s.

Dante Exum had 13 points and P.J. Washington had 12 points and six rebounds for the Mavericks. Dallas shot 52% and was 24 of 47 on 3-pointers.

Dallas tied idle New Orleans for fifth in the Western Conference with eight games remaining for each team.

Jabari Smith Jr. scored 28 points and Aaron Holiday added 16, but Jalen Green was held to just 12 on 5-for-15 shooting as Houston's push for a play-in spot stalled.

Houston shot 42% and was 13 of 38 on 3s.

THUNDER 113, KNICKS 112

NEW YORK (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander made the go-ahead jumper from the corner with 2.6 seconds left, sending Oklahoma City to the playoffs for the first time since 2020 with a victory over New York.

Josh Giddey had 16 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists for Oklahoma City, which moved back into sole possession of first place in the Western Conference at 52-22 with its second straight win.

It was Giddey's third career triple-double—all against the Knicks. He scored 12 points in the fourth quarter, when the Thunder outscored the Knicks 38-27.

Jalen Williams led all scorers with 33 points and Gilgeous-Alexander finished with 19.

Jalen Brunson scored 30 points but missed the potential winning jumper in another tough loss for the Knicks, who lost in overtime Friday in San Antonio. Deuce McBride added 19 and Donte DiVincenzo scored 15.

NUGGETS 130, CAVALIERS 101

DENVER (AP)—Nikola Jokic had 26 points, 18 rebounds and 16 assists for his 22nd triple-double of the season, and Denver beat Cleveland to snap a two-game home losing streak.

Jokic got his 128th career triple-double despite dealing with a sore right wrist that nearly kept him out of Friday's loss to Minnesota.



Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Doncic smiles after making a basket against the Houston Rockets during the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, March 31, 2024, in Houston

Denver guard Jamal Murray missed his fifth straight game due to knee and ankle injuries but has progressed, coach Michael Malone said before the game.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added a season-high 22 points on 7-of-10 shooting from 3-point range. Reggie Jackson had 19 points starting in place of the injured Murray and Michael Porter Jr. also scored 19 points for the Nuggets (52-23), who entered play a half-game behind Minnesota and Oklahoma City for the top spot in the Western Conference.

Evan Mobley scored 23 points and Jarrett Allen had 19 for Cleveland, which has dropped eight of 12. The Cavaliers (45-30) began the day a half-game ahead of New York for fourth in the East.

LAKERS 116, NETS 104

NEW YORK (AP)—LeBron James had one of the best shooting nights of his illustrious career, going 9 for 10 behind the arc to tie his career high for 3-pointers, and matched a season high with 40 points to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a victory over Brooklyn.

James had the sellout crowd at Barclays Center standing on its feet as he put the finishing touches on his 3-point shooting display in the fourth quarter. He reached 40 points for the third time this season, most recently on March 16 in a home loss to Golden State.

The Lakers have won five of six since then, and this victory moved them a season-high nine games over .500 with seven games remaining in the regular season. Los Angeles remained ninth in the Western Conference, but the Lakers could catch

the Sacramento Kings for eighth or the Phoenix Suns for seventh in the West, taking them out of the single-elimination No.9-vs.-No 10 play-in game.

If James has another game like this in the postseason, just about anything is possible for the NBA's career scoring leader who continues to amaze at age 39.

The 20-time All Star finished 13 for 17 overall as the Lakers played the fourth game of a six-game road trip and rebounded from a loss Friday night at Indiana that snapped their five-game winning streak.

Anthony Davis added 24 points and 14 rebounds, and Rui Hachimura had 20 points and 10 rebounds in a game the Lakers led by 20 in the first quarter and controlled throughout.

WARRIORS 117, SPURS 113

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Stephen Curry had 33 points and Golden State held on to beat undermanned San Antonio for their fourth straight victory.

Curry was 12 for 23 from the field, hitting 7 of 15 3-point attempts, as Golden State clings to the final play-in spot in the Western Conference—two games ahead of Houston after the Rockets' home loss to Dallas on Sunday.

Spurs center Victor Wembanyama had 32 points and nine rebounds.

Wembanyama was called for an over-the-back foul on what would have been his 10th rebound with four seconds remaining. Warriors forward Draymond Green made one of two free throws to seal the victory.

Green finished with 21 points and 11 rebounds.

San Antonio had a 7-0 run to

cut Golden State's lead to 113-111 with 59 seconds remaining. Klay Thompson responded with a 3-pointer.

Thompson finished with 13 points.

76ERS 135, RAPTORS 120

TORONTO (AP)—Kelly Oubre Jr. scored a season-high 32 points, Kyle Lowry had 11 points and 10 assists against his former team and Philadelphia snapped a three-game losing streak, beating Toronto.

Cam Payne scored 14 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter, Tobias Harris had 21 and Nicolas Batum 19 to help Philadelphia send Toronto to its 13th straight loss and seventh in a row against the 76ers.

Oubre shot 10 for 22, matching a season high by making 6 of 11 3-point attempts. Philadelphia made a season-high 24 3-pointers on 43 tries.

Guard Tyrese Maxey sat for the 76ers because of tightness in his left hip.

Before the game, Philadelphia coach Nick Nurse said injured center Joel Embiid participated Saturday in a light practice in Toronto. The reigning NBA MVP has been out since Feb. 6 following left knee surgery.

Gary Trent Jr. scored 23 points for Toronto. Jordan Nwora added 19, and Kelly Olynyk had 18 points and 11 rebounds.

CLIPPERS 130, HORNETS 118

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Paul George knocked down eight 3-pointers and finished with a season-high 41 points, and the Los Angeles Clippers defeated Charlotte for their fifth straight road win.

George finished 14 of 21 from the field and 8 of 12

from beyond the arc to beat the Hornets for the 12th consecutive time.

Ivica Zubac had 24 points and 12 rebounds and Kawhi Leonard chipped in with 23 points for the Clippers (47-27).

Miles Bridges scored 33 points on seven 3s and Brandon Miller had 22 for Charlotte (18-56), which has lost eight of nine and continues to limp toward the season finish line.

The Clippers entered the game in fourth place in the Western Conference and were looking to improve their seeding. They built a 12-point half-time lead behind George, who had 22 points on 8-of-13 shooting including five 3s and scored with ease while defended by the rookie Miller.

HEAT 119, WIZARDS 107

WASHINGTON (AP)—Terry Rozier III scored 27 points, Bam Adebayo had 22 and Miami Heat grinded out a victory over Washington.

Jimmy Butler added 17 points for the Heat, who won their second straight. Miami, seventh in the Eastern Conference, went 25 for 29 from the free throw line to move within a half-game of Indiana in the race to avoid the NBA Play-In Tournament.

Jordan Poole scored 22 points and Marvin Bagley III had 12 points and 10 rebounds for Washington on a night Wizards leading scorer Kyle Kuzma sat out with a bruised right heel. Anthony Gill tied a career high with 18 points for the Wizards, who have lost three in a row following a season-high three-game win streak.

Miami hit seven 3-pointers—half of their total makes all game—to take control during a 24-7 run that stretched

across halftime. Rozier hit the final two before the interval, the second giving the Heat a 66-59 edge at the break, their largest lead to that point.

BULLS 109, TIMBERWOLVES 101

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—DeMar DeRozan had 27 points and eight assists and Alex Caruso added 21 points on a season-high seven 3-pointers as hot-shooting Chicago beat Minnesota.

Nikola Vucevic had 19 points and eight rebounds, Coby White scored 17 and Ayo Dosunmu added 13 for the Bulls, who shot 52.5% from the floor, including 58.6% from 3-point range.

Anthony Edwards led the Timberwolves with 22 points and 11 rebounds, but he also had six of Minnesota's 14 turnovers. Rudy Gobert had 19 points and 10 boards, Mike Conley finished with 19 points and seven assists, and Naz Reid had 14 points for the Timberwolves, who were trying to clinch a Western Conference playoff spot.

Minnesota trailed by as much as 16 in the third quarter. But the Wolves chipped away, finally taking the lead 98-96 on Gobert's 3-point play with 5:21 remaining. That was part of a 9-0 run that brought the packed Target Center crowd to its feet.

But DeRozan answered with a steal and a transition layup, then buried a 3 to put the Bulls back on top.

Caruso then hit his seventh 3-pointer and White scored on a fast break as the Bulls took a 106-99 lead with 2:03 to play.

KINGS 127, JAZZ 106

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Harrison Barnes scored 24 points and keyed a big third-quarter run for Sacramento that carried them to a victory over Utah.

Keegan Murray scored 25 points to lead the Kings. De'Aaron Fox had 24 points and 12 assists, and Domantas Sabonis had 17 points and 11 rebounds for his 57th straight double-double. That helped the Kings complete a three-game series sweep against Utah for their first season sweep against the Jazz since the 2001-02 season.

Sacramento moved into a tie for seventh place in the Western Conference with Phoenix but remained two games behind sixth-place Dallas in the race to avoid the play-in tournament.

Brice Sensabaugh and Collin Sexton each scored 22 points for the Jazz, who have lost nine straight games overall. Utah has dropped 11 in a row on the road and hasn't won away from home since Jan. 27 at Charlotte.

Tax Pro, Premier Builders notch wins in Legends hoops

By LEIGH GASES

leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tax Pro/Triple L and Premier Builders notched wins in the Legends

Sports Association Invitational Basketball League Season 2 last March 24 at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

Tax Pro held on to their third place seeding in Bracket B as they won their fourth game in the league after trouncing Stag, 98-63.

Tax Pro remained fresh throughout and continued to hold on to double-digit leads heading into the second half. The first half saw a dominant performance by Tax Pro from the 3-point line, which bal-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tax Pro/Triple L poses for a group photo during the Legends Sports Association Invitational Basketball League Season 2 at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

looned their ever-growing lead.

Brian Natividad held it down from 3-point territory with back-to-back baskets, followed by another three as Lionelle Ibe made field goals in between. Natividad didn't stop there and

made for the 3-point line again and immediately after, Sonny Lerio mirrored him twice from downtown.

The first half ended with another 3-pointer from Manny Embile, and the second half

started with yet again another splash from downtown by Natividad.

It seemed like Stag couldn't get a basket in as Tax Pro wrote them off with aggressiveness and ferocity both from the out-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Premier Builders poses for a group photo during the Legends Sports Association Invitational Basketball League Season 2 at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

side and within the perimeter. Stag wore down not even close to the end as Tax Pro held on to their double-digit lead until the game clock reached zero.

Natividad was Tax Pro's top scorer with 18 points, followed by twin 17 points by Sonny Lerio and Frank Ferrer.

In the first game of the night, Premier Builders edged Live 2 Live, 64-54, for their fourth win.

The first half saw a steady flow of baskets made by the Builders and by the end of it, had a double-digit 40-23 lead thanks to back-to-back threes from Erwin Lumanlan, Richard Peredo, Jomari Dela Cruz, and Arwin Reyes.

While the bullseye was set for the Builders, Live 2 Live fought their way through the first half but were stagnant in most of it. The second half saw a much better performance for Live 2 Live, but they still came up short despite closing within 10 points from a 17-point deficit.

Jomari Dela Cruz led Premier Builders with 13 points, while John Yanto scored 12, and John Mejarito put up 10.

In Bracket A standings, Choju is still undefeated with six wins; Unity Trade and Premier Builders are at 4-2; Yuman is at an even 3-3; Best Deal and Bourbon Bar & Cafe are at 2-3 each;

Savemore is at 1-4; and Live 2 Live has no wins and five losses.

KagBros and TanHoldings are deadlocked with a 5-1 record atop Bracket B standings; Tax Pro/Triple L is at 4-2; Elite Force is at 2-3; Longshot has a 2-3 record; Lamesa Kusina is at 2-4; Stag has won one out of five; and Napa Auto Parts are last with no wins and five losses.

First Game

Premier Builders 64 – Dela Cruz 13, Yanto 12, Mejarito 10, Peredo 8, Villocero 7, Directo 4, Castillo 4, Lumanlan 3, Reyes 3.

Live 2 Live 54 – J. Santos 13, Jones 9, F. Santos 8, Esteves 6, Masaharu 6, Hocog 4, Iguel 2.

Scoring by halves: 40-23, 64-54.

Second Game

Tax Pro/ Triple L 98 – Natividad 18, Lerio 17, Ferrer 17, Rizo 13, Ibe 8, Pineda 6, Usi 5, Embile 5, De Belen 5, Vismanos 2, De Belen 2.

Stag 63 – Lumen 22, De Guzman 14, Marchedesch 6, Casaba 5, Bravo 2, Polido 12, Larioza 2

Scoring by halves: 54-39, 98-63.

29

From page 16

ducted at the NMISTC from Tuesday to Thursday. The JNA players, along with coaches Jerish Angeles, Jireh Yobech and Irish Pagarao, also had an educational tour at the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension, & Education Service's Aquaculture & Natural Resources at the Center for Aquaculture Development in as Terlaje Hill, and the Center for Agriculture Development Agroforestry Demonstration plot in As Perdido last Wednesday. Yesterday, the group went to Marpi for a tree planting activity in partnership with the Marianas Visitors Authority and CNMI Forestry under the Department of Public Lands and Natural Resource.

"We enjoyed the visit at NMC-CREES and also the tree

planting. These visits helped us know that besides playing soccer, we can do other things to benefit our community," said Elyza Brillo, who co-captains the girls team with Betrice Gross.

As for being part of the program, Gross is grateful for the opportunity, and she is determined to make it to the next level—play for the national team in the future.

"I've been playing soccer since I was in pre-school and I keep playing because I want to improve. This program is a great opportunity to get better and I will continue to improve my skills, as I look forward to earning the honor to someday represent the NMI in international competitions."

The NMIFA offers the JNA program in partnership with the Japan Football Association. It is open to players in the 9 to 12

age group and is conducted by licensed coaches. Players under the JNA participate in training sessions for seven months, equipping them with strong fundamentals that will help them prepare to move up into the national team training program.

"I've been part of this program for three years and I could say that it really helped me become a better player. All the hard work at the training sessions were worth it," said JNA boys team captain TJ Hix said.

Hix's co-captain Damien Concepcion said they had fun touring the aquaculture and agriculture farms as they got more knowledge about the variety of food available on island and how they can be cultivated.

Joining Concepcion, Hix, Gross, and Brillo in the program were Melisa Scoggins, Windsor

Gross, Mataina Reyes, Scarlett Loken, Leilani Ruszala, Anica Aquino, Princess Gariguez, Angel Calayag, Aira Daga, Emmjie Escano, Jade Pascual, Aldric Antonio, Logan Propst, Izaiah Tenorio, Zion Ullo, Lashawn Ada, Dominic Chhetri, Zhi Jin, Rhyane Umali, Brandon Teigita, Mateo Angeles, Quido Jambpr, John Ray Daga, Benjie Escano, and Clyde Manangan.

Meanwhile, NMIFA acting technical director Konomo Suzuki sees the training camp and off-the-pitch activities as a great experience for the young players.

"It's definitely a great opportunity for them to become more independent players and to learn how to contribute to our community through a lot of experiences and activities. The players are thankful to the NMIFA for this opportunity," Konomi said. (PR)

SWEET

From page 16

Sweet Rolls continued their sweet ride into home base with two more runs in the fifth from a two-run homer by Iguel. The Buccaneers then got out easy in the sixth inning, but it was too late to play catch up. They then conceded after they scored just three more runs in the last inning.

Sweet Rolls with Evangelista, Iguel, Igitol, Tenorio, Dizzle Diaz, and Perez, consisted of Jon Diaz, Andre Jones, Jayda Norita, Pia Nge-wakl, Anthony Kubo, Terrel Rabago, MJ Tudela, Christopher Pangelinan, Ernie Teigita, and Zoe Macaranas.

The Buccaneers with Chipulong were Dylan Lieto, Marino Santos, Lance Acosta, Tristan Sablan, Jared Reyes, Jahsmin Ramon, Kehahie Jo, Damian Pangelinan, Derenz Castro, Delton Lieto, and Isabella Teigita.

Third place went to Che-

chuGagu Precinct 3.

The tourney's purpose was for the youth from different precincts to build camaraderie and to get moving and into an active lifestyle through sports.

"The mayor [Ramon "RB" Camacho] wanted to use the tournament as a chance for our youth to meet with fellow youth from different precincts to build a sense of community. He wanted to use the tournament as an outlet for our kids and give them activities to do to steer them away from negative influences as well as promote health and fitness amongst them," said SMO's Public Information Office admin assistant Jaden Sanchez.

As for the turnout, he said it was "very good." He said, "Many families of the players came to both games and were very happy with what Mayor [Ramon] "RB" [Camacho] was doing for the kids and encouraged him to continue."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Third place Team Chechu Gagu pose with their trophy during the awards ceremony of the Inaugural Saipan Mayor's Youth Softball Cup 2024 last March 24 at the Capital Hill Softball Field.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho addresses the youth athletes on Day 1 of the tournament at the Dandan Softball Field last March 23.

As for it being yearly, Sanchez said, "we are looking forward to hosting more events

such as this in the future and we are looking to make it continue for our youth."

ANOTHER

From page 16

Japan! On the way back from Doha, in the plane and during transit time at the airport in Incheon, my laptop never switched off. This is because I made a detailed practice plan for Isaiah for Junior Olympic Cup."

For a second, Kimura revealed that they were dreaming of a gold medal in the 100m butterfly after Aleksenko finished first in the preliminary round.

"In the prelims, Isaiah hit the top-ranking time and advanced to the finals. Second was Rento Touge (52.38) and third was Shouon Mitsunaga (52.68). Only Isaiah marked a cut of 52 seconds in the preliminary heats, but Touge and Mitsunaga were clearly saving their energy for the final. We know their potential is to cut 52 seconds."

Kimura went on to say that

Touge and Mitsunaga are top swimmers in Japan, so they swim at a 25m short course meet every week to gain experience in racing. On the other hand, Aleksenko has been practicing for six years on an island without an official swimming pool and only has race experience about twice a year.

"While Japanese top swimmers have experience in countless 25m short course races, the prelims was only Isaiah's second short course race experience in his life. The difference in racing experience was obvious. Therefore, we never had the luxury of saving strength for the finals, so Isaiah swam as fast as he could in the prelims. Japan's top junior athletes I guess didn't go to the beach to lose to an unknown swimmer who came from a small southern island with a population of 50,000," he said.



Overtaken third out on replay leads to a 5-4 Phillies win over Braves.

PAGE 13

Saipan Tribune Sports

Tax Pro, Premier Builders notch wins in Legends hoops.

PAGE 15



16 TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2024

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Another bronze for Isaiah in Jr. Olympic Cup

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Lighting struck twice for Isaiah Aleksenko as he made the CNMI version of the 1993 blockbuster hit “Cool Runnings” when he again won a bronze medal in the in the 47th Junior Olympic Cup at the Tokyo Aquatics Center in Japan.

A day after his third-place finish in the 50m butterfly, the 17-year-old Marianas High School student swam the 100m butterfly in 51:98 last March 30 to again finish second behind 18-year-olds Shouon Mitsu-naga (51:22) and Rento Touge (51:44), both of Japan.

While ecstatic with another podium finish in the biggest stage of high school swimming in the Land of the Rising Sun, Aleksenko pondered if he would’ve been faster if the CNMI actually had a full-fledged swimming pool to train on.

“Our pool is small compared to the regular pools and I was just milliseconds behind so with a proper pool I definitely would’ve been faster,” he said.

Nonetheless, the Saipan Community School alumnus again thanked everyone instrumental in his swimming journey.

“I’m very grateful to represent Saipan. People should know more about Saipan and the amazing culture we have. I’m proud to be from Saipan,” he said.

CNMI national swimming coach Hiroyuki Kimura lik-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Front row from left, Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center manager Yuko Kimura, CNMI national coach Hiro Kimura, Tsunami Saipan support coach in Japan Masato Takahashi. Second row from left, Team Isaiah land coordinator Aiko Hasegawa, former Tsunami Saipan captains and CNMI national swimmers Shin Kimura and Juhn Tenorio: CNMI national swimmer Isaiah Aleksenko, Aleksenko’s personal coach and 2014 NMSA Athlete of Year Kensuke Kimura, and Team Isaiah Accommodations chief Haruka Machi.

29 join JNA Training Camp

The Northern Mariana Islands Football Association’s Junior National Academy concluded its 2023-2024 program with a four-day training camp that was participated in by 29 players and featured training matches and important off-the-pitch activities.

The 29 players (girls and boys) challenged the NMI

U16 National Team pool in training matches at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Wednesday and Sunday and also played against MP United Football Club U14 and Paire Football Club U14 teams.

These games were on top of the training sessions con-

See 29 on Page 15



NMIFA

Top, players under the NMIFA Junior National Academy program pose for a group photo at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan before heading to their training matches last Wednesday. Bottom right photo, players participate in three planting activity in Marpi, while bottom left, a Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research Extension and Education Services staff talks to players during a visit in the As Perdido farm.

ened his ward’s performance last week in Japan to the movie “Cool Runnings” where a coach, played by the late comedic genius John Candy, mentors a novice four-man bobsleigh team from Jamaica

in the Winter Olympics.

“Isaiah unfortunately lost the gold medal. I think he was very disappointed, but he looked very cheerful. I’m really proud of Isaiah. It was a great fight.”

Kimura agreed with Aleksen-

ko’s comment after his bronze in the 50m butterfly that the Tokyo meet served as a redemption tour for him following his disqualification in the 200m individual medley in last February’s 2024 World Aquatics

Championships in Doha, Qatar.

“The moment the race in Doha ended, I switched my mind to the Junior Olympic Cup. Isaiah and I vowed to take revenge from that regret in

See ANOTHER on Page 15

Sweet Rolls rumble to victory in 1st Saipan Mayor’s Youth Softball Cup

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sweet Rolls rumbled to the championships, 13-5, over the Buccaneers in the Inaugural Saipan Mayor’s Office Youth Softball Cup 2024 in the finals last March 24 at the Capital Hill Softball Field.

It was a two-day tourney

that started on March 23 at the Dandan Softball Field with the finals set for the next day.

Out of eight teams, Sweet Rolls and Buccaneers outplayed everyone else and faced off in the championship game.

Sweet Rolls had the upper hand early as they rounded

the bases four times in the second inning for a 4-1 lead. After Noah Iguel’s homer that scored their fourth run, Achilles Evangelista and Justin Igitol hit back-to-back homers to put them up, 6-1 by the third inning.

The Buccaneers’ P.J. Chipulongo added another run to

make it 2-6, but were immediately shut down right after. They went on to be scoreless in the next three innings, while five more runs scored for Sweet Rolls in the fourth from another long ball from Evangelista, along with runs by Brandon Tenorio, Dizzle Diaz, Iguel, and Greg Perez.

See SWEET on Page 15



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team Sweet Rolls are the champions of the Inaugural Saipan Mayor’s Youth Softball Cup 2024 after they defeated the Buccaneers, 13-5, last March 24 at the Capital Hill Softball Field.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team Buccaneers pose with their second-place trophy after the championship game of the Inaugural Saipan Mayor’s Youth Softball Cup 2024 last March 24 at the Capital Hill Softball Field.